



# Housing Policy Solutions for Older Adults

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Rhode Island Secretary of Housing Stefan Pryor

October 10, 2023

**RHODE  
ISLAND**

# ESSENTIAL DATA

## There is a lack of affordable, safe, and accessible housing options for Rhode Islanders living on fixed incomes

- TOTAL NUMBER OF SECTION 202 HOUSING FOR THE ELDERLY APARTMENTS IN RHODE ISLAND = 1,367 homes at 50 properties
  - The average household income for Rhode Islanders in these apartments is \$17,077.
- HOUSING COST BURDEN RATES FOR RHODE ISLAND SENIORS
  - Age 50 to 64 – Renters: 48.1%      Homeowners: 20.3%
  - Age 65 to 79 – Renters: 49.2%      Homeowners: 26.7%
  - Age 80 and over – Renters: 54.4%      Homeowners: 36%
  - SSI currently pays \$880.92 monthly, which is 15.2% of the statewide median income
  - Using statewide housing market data, a person living on SSI would need to pay 106% of their monthly income for an efficiency apartment and 119% for a one-bedroom

# AGING IN PLACE

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## Providing expanded supports to enable aging in place must be a top policy priority

- **Home repair program**
- There is **\$4.5 million** in new funding to help low-income Rhode Islanders make necessary improvements to their homes. This new effort is coming together with seniors in mind, intending that home repairs will enable older Rhode Islanders to continue in their homes.
  - Potential types of improvements that can be supported with home repair funding include
    - Repairing structural issues such as roof, heating, cooling, and plumbing
    - Installation of ramps and improvements to create accessibility of bathroom features such as no-step shower and tub entry
    - Replacement of doors and windows to account for limited mobility and to better control interior temperatures
    - Updating light fixtures, doorbells, and alarms to account for declining vision or hearing

# RHODE ISLAND MEDICAL RESPITE PILOT PROGRAM

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**Recuperative care for people experiencing housing insecurity or homelessness with a simultaneous acute medical and/or behavioral health support needs.**

- Program clients will be engaged with a medical provider who will oversee care and recovery from illness or injury in partnership with EOHHS
- Clients' length of stay is dependent on the recovery timetable and treatment plan established with the medical provider
- Program has a capacity of 30 beds
  - Located at Hallworth House, 66 Benefit Street in Providence
- Program provides individual rooms, housing navigation support, meals and other social service supports



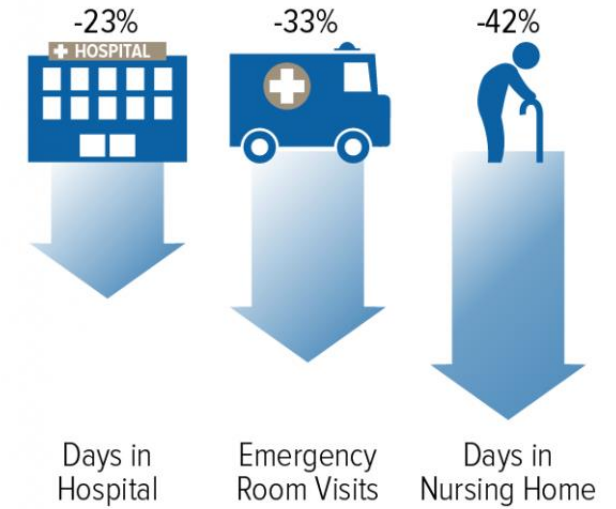
# EXPANDING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

## Recognizing the urgent need to connect services with housing

- **Serious value savings emerge from supportive services**
  - Housing with services reduces costs associated with healthcare, incarceration, psychiatric intervention, and transportation
- **Expanding services and coordination staff**
  - Transportation to medical appointments
  - Assistance in navigating healthcare systems such as Medicare and Medicaid
  - Expansion of on-site clinics or visitations from medical specialists
  - Meal programs to ensure proper nutrition
  - Coordination of counseling services for mental health or addiction
- **Medicaid waiver expands supportive services**

## Supportive Housing Can Produce Health Care Savings

Combining affordable housing with intensive services for a high-needs group saved an average of over \$6,000 a year per person in health care



Note: Intensive services include help finding housing, working with a landlord, physical and behavioral health care, assistance finding employment, and others.

Source: Anirban Basu, *et al.*, "Comparative Cost Analysis of Housing and Case Management Program for Chronically Ill Homeless Adults Compared to Usual Care," *Health Services Research*, February 2012, Vol. 47, No. 1, Part II, pp. 523-543.

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# PRIORITY PROJECTS FUND

## New resources for development of rental housing to address vulnerable populations

- FY24 budget approved **\$27 million** to create the Priority Projects Fund
  - Resources will address developments that are difficult to bring together under conventional financing
  - Older adults and people with disabilities are among those lower-income, vulnerable populations who will benefit from these new resources
- Other development resources will be made available next month through the Consolidated RFP (Request for Proposals)
  - **Noteworthy update:** the Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) now further incentivizes rental housing that serves households living at 30% of area median income (AMI) or below, including people living on fixed incomes

# Statewide Housing Plans

## Identifying Barriers to Progress and Goals for the Future

- The Abt Associates team also includes its partners Root Policy Research and the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns.
- Team has recent experience producing similar statewide housing plans in New Hampshire and New Mexico.
- Team that includes strong professional connections to Rhode Island and familiarity with New England.
- Experience as a provider of HUD technical assistance with strong expertise on federal housing and community development programs.



Likely timeline for interim work products will approximately be:

- Late winter 2023/2024
- Spring 2024
- Late 2024



# THANK YOU!

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Your advocacy is so important,  
and your voices are valued

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