

April 15, 2026

The Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi  
House Speaker, Rhode Island General Assembly  
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

Dear Speaker Shekarchi:

I write to express NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley's strong support for the proposed \$200,000 State appropriation to the Housing Network of Rhode Island (HNRI) to strengthen community development capacity and improve production and coordination across the housing and homelessness response system.

Under your leadership, Rhode Island has taken meaningful and commendable steps to address the housing crisis, including investments in affordable housing production, policy reforms to reduce barriers to development, and a growing focus on homelessness prevention. These efforts reflect the strong commitment of policymakers and have helped lay an important foundation for progress.

Despite this laudable progress, Rhode Island continues to face significant housing challenges. The nonprofit housing, community development and homelessness sectors are working every day to respond to the real-life impacts of housing affordability and supply challenges. Reductions in federal funding and uncertainty about the future of critical housing programs strains the capacity of RI nonprofits who already work in a complex and demanding environment.

HNRI has a strong track record of advancing collaborative, statewide solutions. For more than three decades, we have supported nonprofit community development organizations, convened cross-sector partners, and helped advance policies and investments that expand access to affordable homes. Through our affiliated nonprofit, the Community Housing Land Trust of Rhode Island, we provide technical assistance, training, and educational resources to local stakeholders, helping organizations, municipalities, and partners, including numerous for-profit developers, build the knowledge and capacity needed to effectively develop, preserve, and support affordable housing.

This appropriation is a strategic investment to improve the systems and organizations needed to meet the current moment. By strengthening coordination, supporting capacity-building, and improving information sharing and communication, this appropriation will help advance efforts to reduce fragmentation, improve efficiency, and ultimately impact low- and moderate-income Rhode Islanders seeking safe, healthy, and affordable homes.

I urge the General Assembly to support this appropriation. It is a modest investment that will have significant statewide impact—strengthening organizations, improving system performance, and helping more Rhode Islanders access and maintain stable housing. Thank you for your leadership and your commitment to addressing Rhode Island's housing challenges.

Sincerely,



Joe Garlick,  
Executive Director

