



April 22, 2026

The Honorable Marvin Abney
Chair, House Finance Committee
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Housing Network of Rhode Island Proposed \$200,000 Appropriation

Dear Chairman Abney,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Bankers Association (“RIBA”), I write to express strong support for the proposed \$200,000 appropriation to the Housing Network of Rhode Island (“HNRI”) to strengthen community development capacity and improve coordination across the housing and homelessness response system.

RIBA represents financial institutions that are deeply committed to supporting the economic vitality of our communities. Access to safe, stable, and affordable housing is foundational to that vitality. Housing stability strengthens local economies, supports workforce participation, and underpins the long-term financial health of individuals and families across the state.

Under House leadership, Rhode Island has taken meaningful and commendable steps in recent years 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 a strong commitment from policymakers and have laid an important foundation for continued progress.

At the same time, Rhode Island continues to face significant housing challenges. Limited supply, rising costs, and gaps in affordability continue to constrain economic growth and limit opportunities for residents and employers alike. Reductions in federal funding and uncertainty surrounding key housing programs are placing additional strain on the nonprofit organizations that play a critical role in addressing these challenges.

HNRI has a strong track record of advancing collaborative, statewide solutions. For more than three decades, it has supported nonprofit community development organizations, convened cross-sector partners, and helped advance policies and investments that expand access to affordable housing. Through its affiliated nonprofit, the Community Housing Land Trust of Rhode Island, it also provides valuable technical assistance, training, and resources that help strengthen the capacity of organizations working on the front lines of housing development and preservation.

Financial institutions frequently partner with nonprofit developers and community organizations to finance affordable housing and community development initiatives. From our perspective, the effectiveness of these partnerships depends on a strong, well-coordinated ecosystem. HNRI plays a critical role in fostering that coordination, such as helping align stakeholders, streamline communication, and ensure that projects can move forward efficiently and successfully.

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This appropriation represents a strategic investment in the systems that support housing production and stability. Strengthening coordination and capacity across the housing sector will help reduce fragmentation, improve the deployment of capital, and enhance the overall effectiveness of public and private investments. In turn, this will support a more resilient housing market and a stronger statewide economy.

We also recognize that investments in capacity-building and shared infrastructure can yield significant returns. When nonprofit partners are well-supported and equipped with the tools they need, projects are more likely to succeed, timelines are more predictable, and resources are used more efficiently, benefiting residents, communities, and financing partners alike.

RIBA respectfully urges the Committee to support this appropriation. It is a modest but impactful investment that will strengthen the housing ecosystem, improve system performance, and help more Rhode Islanders access and maintain stable housing.

Thank you for your leadership and your ongoing commitment to addressing Rhode Island's housing challenges.

Sincerely,

RHODE ISLAND BANKERS ASSOCIATION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Farrell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Will Farrell