

westelmwood

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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The Honorable Louis DiPalma
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
82 Smith Street, Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chair DiPalma and Members of the Committee:

I write to express West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation's 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. For the past 55 years, we have worked to build affordable housing and healthy and sustainable communities.

Under General Assembly 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 the strong commitment of policymakers and have helped lay an important foundation for progress.

At the same time, Rhode Island continues to face significant housing challenges. The nonprofit housing 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 certain critical housing programs are straining the capacity of nonprofits who are already working 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 its affiliated nonprofit, the Community Housing Land Trust of Rhode Island, we also provide technical assistance, training, and educational resources to local stakeholders, helping organizations, municipalities, and partners build the knowledge and capacity needed to effectively develop, preserve, and support affordable housing. As a Board member of the Housing Network, I have seen the deep commitment to advocating on behalf of our member agencies for collective progress.

This appropriation represents a strategic investment in 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 respectfully urge the Committee to support this appropriation. It is a modest investment with the potential for 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Candace Harper".

Candace Harper
Executive Director