

**Homes RI**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **A Call to Place Housing at The Center of Federal Coronavirus Relief Funds**

(Providence, RI) - This week, Homes RI provided guidance on usage of federal coronavirus relief funds. Even before the coronavirus, evidence showed that housing is healthcare. And the gap between wages and housing cost was already wide before the pandemic's economic fallout. The annual income needed to afford a two-bedroom apartment in 2018 was \$64,840, more than twice the median renter income in Rhode Island and nearly three-times the annual income of a full-time worker earning minimum wage. The median renter income of \$32,361 can not comfortably afford a two-bedroom apartment in any city in Rhode Island. Rhode Island's Department of Labor and Training has reported 248,000 unemployment claims filed since March 9. Rent was due May 1, and too many already could not pay last month's rent.

Homes RI is a coalition of organizations working to increase the supply of safe, healthy and affordable homes. The attached Recommended Priorities for Investment of Federal Relief Funds provides hope through smart prioritizing based on impact and need:

- Emergency rent and mortgage assistance for tenants and homeowners
- Emergency housing supports to prevent and end homelessness
- Comprehensive and inclusive outreach
- Sustaining support for safe and healthy homes

The state's domestic violence hotline has received a sharp spike in calls. People are trapped in unsafe and unstable housing and financial situations. The state's housing finance agency has received thousands of calls each week from homeowners in need of help. Strategic use of coronavirus relief funds will play a vital role in Rhode Island's recovery.

Homes RI is a coalition of organizations working together to increase the supply of safe, healthy and affordable homes throughout Rhode Island. We believe Rhode Island can and should be a state where all residents are able to live in safe, healthy and sustainable homes in thriving communities.

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