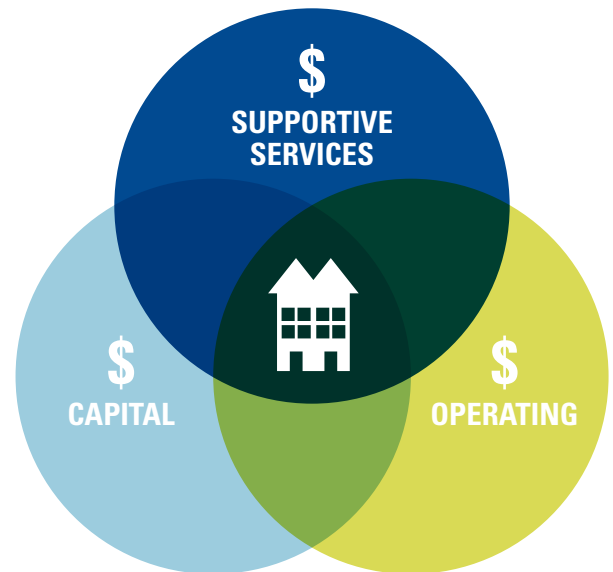


# Ending Homelessness in RI Through Opening Doors

**Opening Doors Rhode Island**, the state’s plan to prevent and end homelessness, outlines initiatives that align state, federal, and private resources to increase the amount of stable and affordable homes, improve health through services, and increase economic security.

Permanent supportive housing is a proven method for reducing homelessness and is the signature initiative of Opening Doors. It combines long-term affordable rental housing with services needed to help people live stable, healthier, and more productive lives.

Permanent supportive housing requires public investment to keep rents affordable, funding for support services and in some cases, capital dollars to support development of the homes.



- RI State investment typically leverages Federal & private dollars
- RI State investment typically leverages Federal & RI Housing dollars
- RI State investment typically leverages Federal & Philanthropic

## PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



**CAPITAL EXPENSES:**

rehabilitating 10-unit foreclosed apartment building

**RECURRING OPERATING EXPENSES:**

property management; maintenance and repair costs; property taxes; insurance water and sewer; landscaping/snow removal

**SUPPORT SERVICES:**

transportation; case-management; employment training

**TENANT:** formerly homeless veterans with annual incomes no greater than \$20,188.<sup>1</sup>

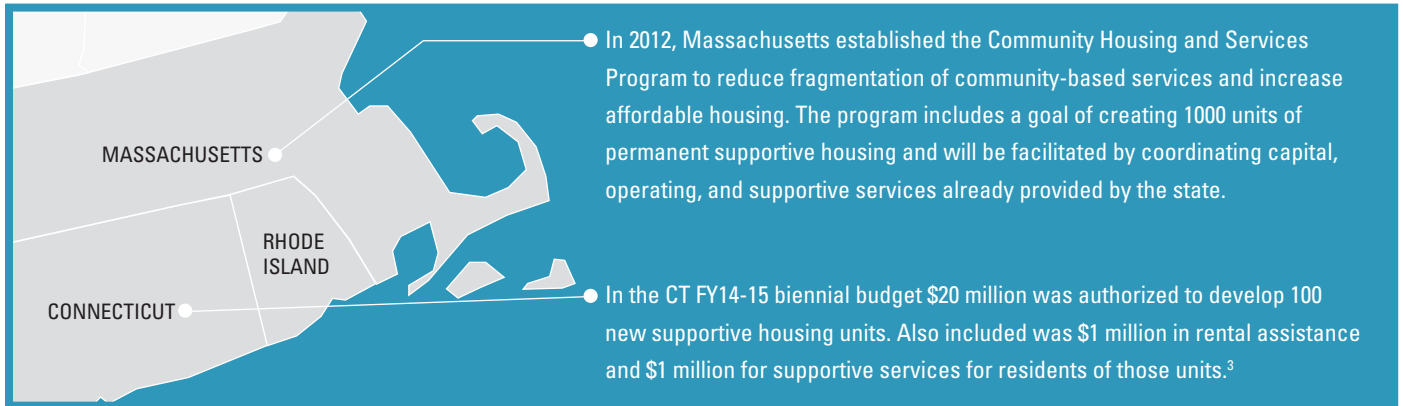
*MARY is the executive director of a nonprofit that provides rental housing to formerly homeless veterans. Mary’s organization offers tenants supportive services like transportation, employment training and coordination of medical and mental health appointments. The state’s Building Homes Rhode Island program helped Mary to rehab a foreclosed apartment building into 10 one-bedroom rental homes. Mary’s tenant Ray cannot afford to pay more than \$221 in rent so she receives rental subsidies from the state to cover the difference between what Ray can afford and the operating costs of his apartment. To help provide for Ray’s case management and assist with his PTSD and anxiety, Mary’s organization receives a federal grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and grants from local philanthropic organizations.*

<sup>1</sup>40% of AMI for 1 person. NOP income limits RI Housing as of May 2103

Like Rhode Island, many states are turning toward permanent supportive housing as a more cost-effective way to reduce homelessness in their states.

In New England, Connecticut is making significant investments in capital, operating, and support services dollars necessary for a sustainable transition to more permanent supportive housing. Connecticut recognizes that supportive housing is a cost effective approach.

Massachusetts also reduced its spending on emergency shelters so as to allocate more funding to permanent supportive housing and other programs that would keep people in their homes.<sup>2</sup>



## RI'S OPENING DOORS GOAL

500 additional supportive housing units, or 100 additional units a year for 5 years, 2012-2016

**STATE CAPITAL COMMITTED \$:**  
25% of units created with \$25 million housing bond must be supportive housing units

**STATE OPERATING COMMITTED \$:**  
\$750,000

**STATE SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTED \$:**  
Funds scattered among various state department budgets

## POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

### CAPITAL

The current shortage of affordable housing in Rhode Island leaves many low-income Rhode Islanders at risk for homelessness. A consistent investment in the development of affordable housing will leverage federal and private funds and contribute to the goals of Opening Doors.

### OPERATING

A sustained state investment in operating support leverages federal resources aimed at closing the housing affordability gap for the lowest income households. Rhode Island should continue to fund its newly established rental voucher program to ensure that rents can be set at a level that is both affordable for low-income renters and sustainable for property owners.

### SERVICES

Various state departments have existing programs that provide services for formally homeless people now living in permanent supportive housing. However, there is no systematic way to determine the extent to which the state is currently funding these supportive services. It is essential for these funds to be identified and to link existing services with affordable homes in order for a cost-effective implementation of Opening Doors.

<sup>2</sup><https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2012/Chapter58>

<sup>3</sup>[http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/hhs/interagency\\_council\\_on\\_affordable\\_housing/meeting\\_2013\\_07-15/2013\\_housing\\_legislativeoverview.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/hhs/interagency_council_on_affordable_housing/meeting_2013_07-15/2013_housing_legislativeoverview.pdf)