

H O U S I N G



N E T W O R K

PRESS RELEASE

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HOUSING NETWORK LAUNCHES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MONTH

Month of activities planned to celebrate contributions of Rhode Island's nonprofit affordable housing developers

PROVIDENCE – The Housing Network of Rhode Island and its members gathered at the State House on April 3 to launch Community Development Month to celebrate the impact of Rhode Island's Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and nonprofit housing developers.

The Housing Network is made up of 19 member organizations committed to the development of affordable homes and vital communities across R.I. Community Development Month is an opportunity to celebrate these organizations and the transformational work they do to build a brighter, more equitable future.

"The Housing Network's members are a vital piece of Rhode Island's housing development sector and are at the forefront of the effort to expand equitable housing and economic opportunities for low-income Rhode Islanders. We know community development goes beyond bricks and mortar. In addition to helping to address Rhode Island's affordable housing crisis; these mission-driven organizations are making lasting change in communities statewide by offering a variety of critical resources," said Melina Lodge, Executive Director, Housing Network of Rhode Island. "We invite you to join us this week to learn more and celebrate the many contributions of our members."

Following the April 3 kickoff, HNRI's members will be hosting their own events in the communities they serve throughout the month (see full schedule below).

Based on a recent survey, Housing Network members have the capacity to produce and preserve over 2,100 homes within the next three years if the necessary resources are allocated.

In addition to producing safe and affordable homes from Westerly to Woonsocket, our members are actively engaged within the communities they serve; maintaining child care facilities and commercial spaces; supporting community gardens and start-up food enterprises; providing job

training, homebuyer counseling, landlord education and home repair funds; and offering personal and small business micro-loans or grants.

"Community development is about comprehensively addressing a community's needs at large and bringing parity in access to basic needs such as food security, healthcare, education, and opening other doors that deliver economic opportunity to our state's most vulnerable populations," said Jennifer Hawkins, President and CEO, ONE Neighborhood Builders. "Oftentimes housing is the first big step to other pieces falling into place for residents we serve at ONE NB. Over the course of nearly four decades, our organization has developed over 480 rental units and 130 homeownership units in our mission to expand more equitable communities."

"Rhode Island's nonprofit developers are committed to building stronger, more resilient communities. By empowering residents and educating future homebuyers through programs like homebuyer and landlord education workshops – and by providing affordable, healthy homeownership and rental opportunities for Rhode Islanders – nonprofits like NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley are leading neighborhood revitalization efforts and encouraging economic opportunity for every resident no matter their income," said Daynah Gist-Williams, Director of Homeownership and Asset Building Services, NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley.

"This month, we celebrate the ways local nonprofits rejuvenate the communities they anchor. Resources like Providence Revolving Fund's home repair program are a key factor in addressing Rhode Island's affordable housing and racial wealth gaps," said Carrie Zaslow, Executive Director, Providence Revolving Fund. "Homeownership provides most households with their largest asset and wealth builder, but for many R.I. homeowners, deferred repairs can result in condemned property; leading to lost units and displaced former homeowners struggling to find alternate affordable housing. Home repair programs provide access to capital and technical assistance to create safe and healthy homes for owners and tenants."

The schedule of events for Community Development Month 2024 can be found below. Visit www.housingnetworkri.org or www.facebook.com/housingnetworkri for updates.

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Housing Network of Rhode Island is the state's membership organization for agencies committed to the development of affordable housing and vital communities. Currently composed of 19 community development corporations and affordable housing developers, our members have created thousands of affordable housing units from Westerly to Woonsocket and are leading community revitalization and economic development efforts across our state. Their wide array of activities – including real estate development, financial asset building, housing counseling, resident empowerment and engagement and much more – create tangible community change and transform the lives of Rhode Islanders.

Our members: **Church Community Housing Corporation, Crossroads Rhode Island, Foster Forward, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Providence and East Bay, House of Hope Community Development Corporation, Jonnycake Center, NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley, Omni**

Development Corporation, ONE Neighborhood Builders, Pawtucket Central Falls Development, Pawtucket Housing Authority, Providence Revolving Fund, Sojourner House, South County Habitat for Humanity, SWAP (Stop Wasting Abandoned Property) Inc., Valley Affordable Housing Corporation, WARM Center, West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation & Women's Development Corporation

2024 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MONTH EVENT SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, April 3

Community Development Month Launch – 3 p.m.

Community Development Month will launch at the Rhode Island State House, where HNRI's nonprofit members will gather on the first floor to highlight their services and the positive impacts they are making statewide.

Address: 82 Smith St, Providence, RI 02903.

Scavenger Hunt

Habitat for Humanity of Greater Providence and East Bay is organizing a scavenger hunt throughout the City of Providence (to run from April 3 through the end of the month). Post photos of the treasure and get a real prize! #HabitatHuntforHumanity

Visit: <https://habitatpvd.org/events/scavenger-hunt/> to learn more.

Friday, April 5

Fresh Fridays: Cost Of Developing Affordable Housing – 8:45am-9:30am

Join ONE Neighborhood Builders for an online learning opportunity for practitioners, community members, and policymakers interested in community development. Tune in to hear from affordable housing developers and funders about factors that impact cost, including land acquisition, environmental remediation, construction costs, design requirements, and development timelines. Panelists will share examples of how these considerations have impacted their housing developments and discuss strategies to reduce costs.

Virtual Event: [Register on Zoom](#).

Wednesday, April 10

Free homebuyer education workshop – 5:30 p.m.

Pawtucket Central Falls Development will celebrate financial fitness month and address the current conversation of the competitive housing market by empowering residents through a no-cost introductory virtual homebuying workshop alongside BankRI.

Virtual event: <https://qrco.de/HomebuyingPower>

Friday, April 12

Construction tour – 10:30 a.m.

Join Crossroads Rhode Island for a construction tour at 94 Summer Street, where the organization is developing 176 permanent supportive apartments for formerly homeless adults.

Address: 94 Summer St., Providence, RI, 02903

Monday, April 22

Earth Day cleanup – 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (Registration opens at 9:15 a.m.)

West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation will host an Earth Day cleanup at the community gardens (light garden cleaning, planting and mulching).

Address: 70 Westfield St., Providence, RI, 02907

Thursday, April 25

Meet and greet – 9-11 a.m.

Valley Affordable Housing Corporation will host a meet and greet featuring coffee and pastries at their Cumberland office.

Address: 1029 Mendon Road, Cumberland, RI 02864

Friday, April 26

Ribbon cutting ceremony – 10:30 a.m.

Join ONE Neighborhood Builders and Foster Forward for a ribbon cutting ceremony at their Riverside Square development.

Address: 336 Bullocks Point Ave., East Providence, RI 02915

Monday, April 29

Supportive housing listening session – 10 a.m.

House of Hope Community Development Corporation will discuss their work to provide supportive housing in Warwick. Light refreshments will be served.

Address: 3188 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02886

Groundbreaking Ceremony – 11 a.m.

Pawtucket Central Falls Development will host a groundbreaking celebration of 62 new and preserved affordable housing units.

Address: 44 Central Street, Central Falls, RI 02863

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