

We'll Get You Home: 2019 Annual Report

Rhode Island Housing

Communications: Annual Report

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New Decade, New Focus, New Look

As we closed out one year, ended one decade and looked toward the next, we wanted to create an annual report that encapsulated key messaging and had a sharp focus on the work we do. In recent communications efforts, we've developed more streamlined and less complicated text that conveys our mission to help people meet their housing needs and achieve their housing goals. Simply put, we help people find, rent, buy, keep, improve and build homes. Looking to further encapsulate and convey our role in the state, we came up with our 2019 annual report theme and title: ***We'll Get You Home***.

'Home' means different things to different people, but for us, 'home' is at the core of our mission. With an almost 50-year history, we are proud of our role in providing a range of housing options for Rhode Islanders and helping to define the housing landscape in our state. We wanted to *celebrate the successes of 2019 while developing an annual report that provides a snapshot of our main mission areas, is easily digestible, features engaging text and compelling visuals and supports our new brand and recently launched website.*

Timing is Everything

Our annual report features the highlights and stories of the previous calendar year and is traditionally released in late March or very early April to coincide with our annual legislative event and spring homebuying breakfast. As we were putting the finishing touches on the 2019 report, we had to quickly pivot to meet the demands and communications needs resulting from the COVID-19 health crisis.

When we had a moment to refocus on the release of the report, we reexamined the key messaging and data through the lens of the pandemic and the needs of Rhode Islanders. We wanted to ensure information on the kinds of programs and services we provide was clear and accessible. We reconfigured the initial design concepts and added an introductory message regarding the pandemic. Our goal with these tweaks was to convey a strong message of support and stability.

Themes

While our overall report theme is identifying and highlighting the many ways RIHousing works to get Rhode Islanders home, we also wanted to highlight the many kinds of partners and partnerships that help us achieve our mission. With a partner focus, we were able to recognize and highlight partners, create awareness of the kinds of collaborations involved in our work, and drive traffic to partner websites. Our agency tagline – Invest. Build. Believe. – inspired us to also keep three words at the forefront of our minds as we crafted our 2019 annual report: **Engage, inform, educate.**

At a Glance

We recognize that our customers, partners and the public are busy (*especially so during these challenging times*). So, this year, we streamlined and designed our annual report to allow readers to review and digest the top-level information in ten minutes or less. For those who want to dig deeper, we've designed it so readers can explore and better understand how housing investments and creative partnerships support the housing needs of Rhode Islanders. A quick read through provides a strong overview of our agency mission and goals, supported by data, outcomes and program specific details with one click of "Read More."

Bold and Fresh Design

Beginning a new decade felt like a unique opportunity to try things differently. Our plan was to write, design and create differently than we ever had. We wanted to continue our shift from previous annual reports in design, content and length, moving beyond the traditional customer profiles and relying more

heavily on presenting compelling data, visuals and narrative. The freedom to try things differently allowed for a more creative mindset not limited by a forced structure (and word count) based on past reports.

The report is completely integrated into our new website vs posted as a PDF or other platforms that prevent true engagement. We felt strongly we wanted the reader to really interact with the content vs feeling like they were reading an online book. Our 2019 annual report features a new look and format that allows for *bolder and more compelling infographics and visuals*. Photos are saturated with color and the design fully embraces our new brand and visual identity. Shifts in messaging and tone make for more impactful narratives. Rather than writing to an established format, we let the message determine the format and design, allowing us greater freedom for creativity.

Engagement

Of course, we want to engage our audiences with compelling information and visuals, but we also want to track and measure reader engagement. As the report utilizes the same CMS platform as our agency website, and is built off the site, we can collect analytics to better inform future reports and incorporate into our broader agency outreach efforts. Additionally, the report is chock full of hyperlinks to more information, driving readers to program data and information, allowing us to analyze readers' interest and behaviors.

Roll Out

We decided to forgo a hard copy version of the report as many of our partners and contacts are currently working remotely and would not be receiving mail at their respective offices. An added bonus is that we further reduced the costs associated with producing the annual report by saving on printing and mailing costs.

We promoted the release of the report with an agency e-blast sent to several thousand of our contacts, prominent promotion on our website (home page and various sub-pages and pop-ups throughout) and ongoing social media posts highlighting various aspects and topics of the report.

Outcomes

Our new 2019 Annual Report met our goals and then some! In less than three weeks since we rolled out the new report, we've had over 600 webpage visits (747 page views), 466 interactions and 425 page scrolls; based on behavior mapping, readers are connecting with and engaging with our online report. Analytics show that almost 50% are reading the report on mobile devices vs PC and analytics from the Annual Report e-blast show 66% of recipients spent time reading the email and clicking on links.

Our report succeeds in providing a sense of stability for Rhode Islanders, showcasing agency innovation (in the report design itself as well as our programs), and most importantly, signaling a clear message to our state and its residents that we are here for them and our commitment has never wavered. These assurances are even more important during these complicated and challenging times.

Why It's Deserving of an Award

- "No" Cost: online only; utilized in-house staff and existing technologies/platform as well as photography – *no outside resources used*
- Significant improvements over 2018 annual report (first year we went online) in terms of layout, look, functionality
- Bold design and messaging with

- Informative infographics: rich with data and additional context about programs and services
- Interactive, engaging and dynamic: text, graphics, and links
- Clean, well-designed look and layout; Strong reinforcement of agency brand and key messaging
- Movement: data and infographics move, advance and surprise
- Supports recently launched agency website; highlighting primary mission areas: Rent a Home, Buy a Home, Keep a Home and Build a Home
- Infographics and each primary “mission area” stand on its own and can be repurposed in other efforts and platforms throughout the year
- Web platform (WordPress) is easy to use, without outside or special IT assistance and/or coding required
- New this year:
 - Agency philanthropic highlights: showing our personal commitment to the well-being of Rhode Islanders
 - Looking Ahead: positive outlook that we will continue doing what we do best: providing opening the doors to homeownership, keeping people in safe and healthy homes, and building livable and sustainable communities across our state.
 - COVID-19 introduction: reinforcing that we understand the challenges and we are committed to helping Rhode Islanders overcome the obstacles
- Platform is mobile responsive (*in fact, it looks great on mobile!*) and ADA compliant
- We were able to finalize the report and roll it out despite staff working remotely

Don't believe us? Click [here](#) and see for yourselves.



2019
Annual Report



The opening graphic allows you to link to the mission area most important to you and reinforces the theme of the report .

FULL IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

DYNAMIC + ENGAGING STORYTELLING DRIVEN BY DATA

CELEBRATE + RECOGNIZE PARTNERS AND STAFF

RESPONSIVE DESIGN



THOUGHTFUL DESIGN PROCESS

- Continue our shift from previous annual reports in design, content and length
- Present bolder, more compelling data, visuals and narrative
- Viewers engage and interact with the content - fully embrace online capacity
- Fully embrace the new brand and visual identity

BENEFIT TO FULL IN-HOUSE CAPACITY

- Utilized in-house staff and existing technologies/platform as well as photography – no outside resources used
- In-house capacity to design and generate content = quick response to changing health crisis
- Taking a moment to reflect on the impact of COVID-19 and our role in supporting Rhode Islanders

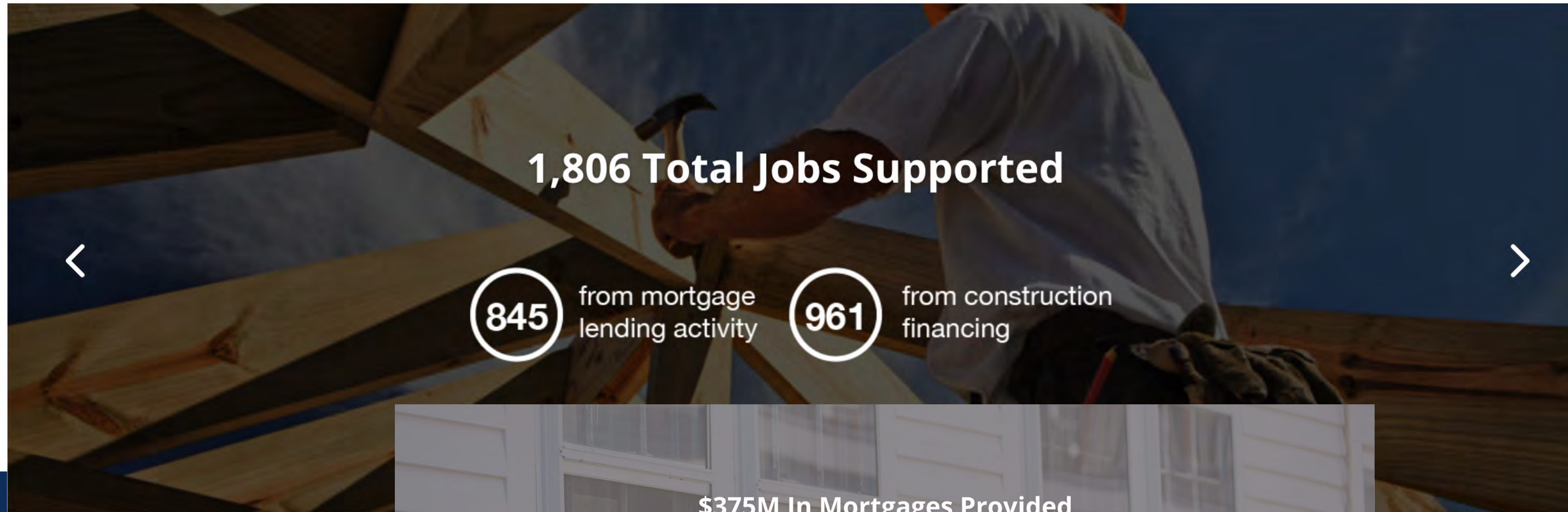
A NOTE ABOUT COVID-19

In reflecting on our 2019 accomplishments and looking toward the future, we recognize that the COVID-19 health crisis has impacted residents across our state and that the effects of the crisis will be felt for some time to come. We know that it will take a sustained commitment to support families, partners and communities who are struggling as a result of the pandemic.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has created numerous challenges, we are confident that we will be able to overcome them with a coordinated effort that includes partners at all levels of government, state agencies, business leaders and the non-profit community.

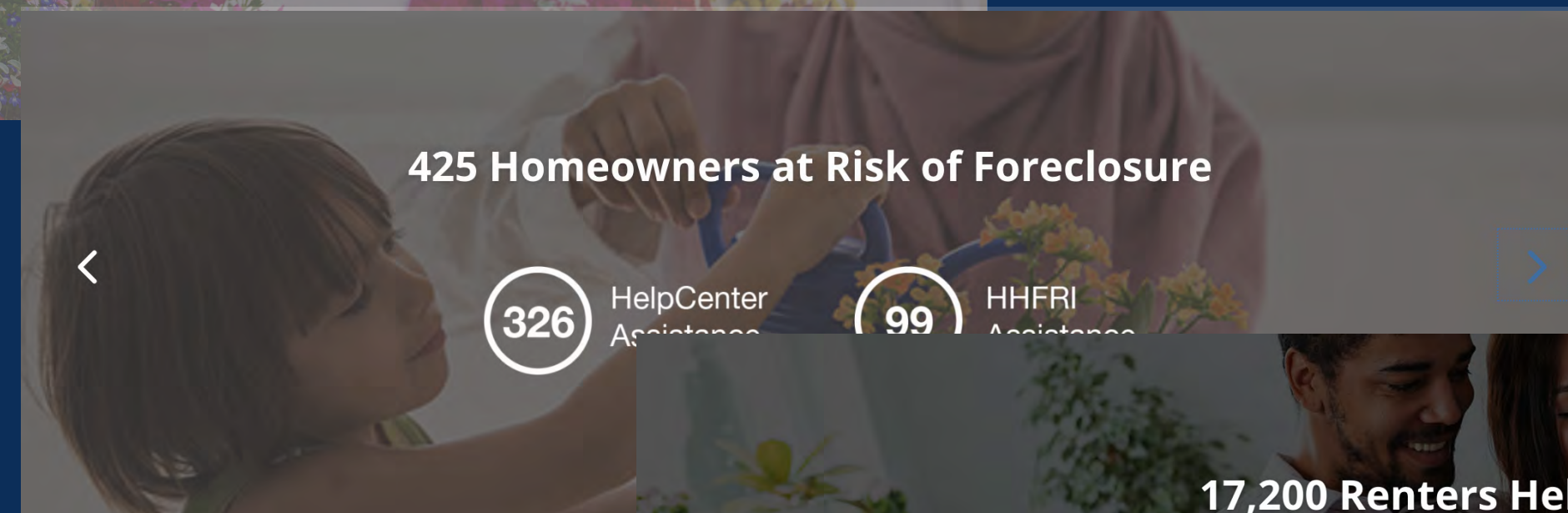
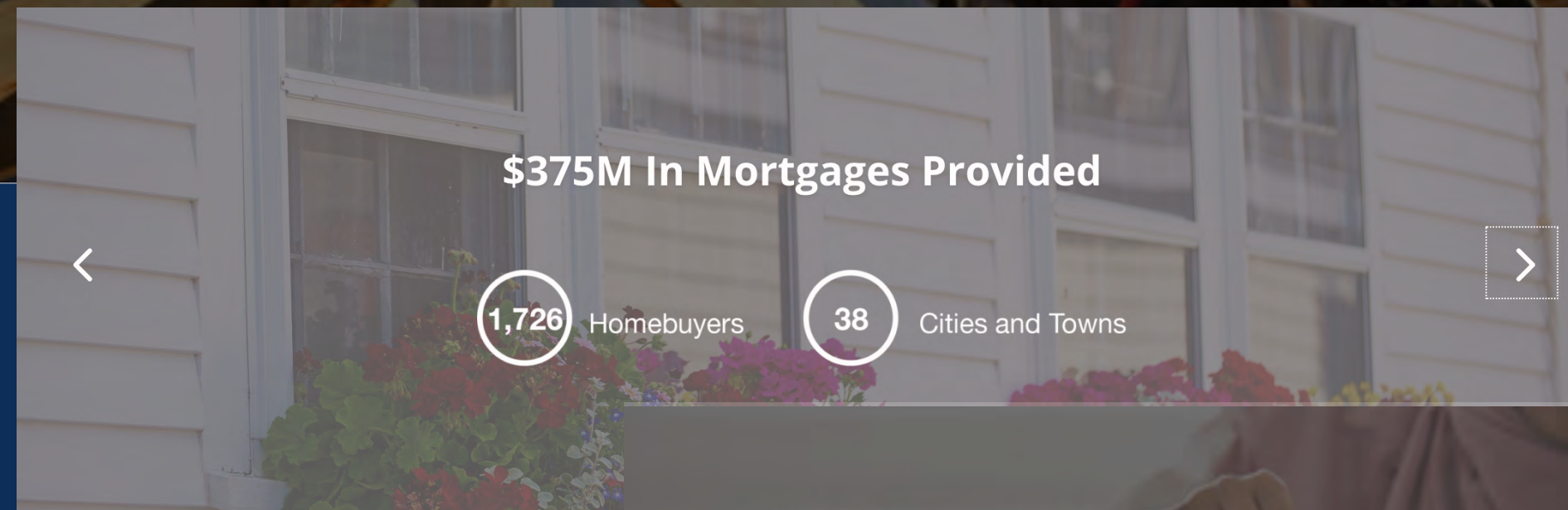
We've been here for almost 50 years, helping Rhode Islanders find, rent, buy, keep and build homes. Our commitment has not wavered and we are focused on being a part of the recovery.

As we move through these difficult times together, know that we are planning for the future. A future that will build upon past successes and include innovative ways to build and preserve housing and provide stable and secure homes for Rhode Islanders.



DYNAMIC AND ENGAGING CONTENT

Dynamic, interactive graphics allow us to capture information highlights and data in one place.



DATA-DRIVEN STORYTELLING

A deeper dive - Read More - pulls up rich data content and updates across programs and services within each topic area.



BUY A HOME

A tight inventory of available homes, high rental costs and student loan debt can prove challenging for many prospective homebuyers. We know the challenges and opportunities that buyers face, and we tailor our programs to reflect market conditions and homebuyer demographics.

In 2019, we helped 1,726 homebuyers put down roots in Rhode Island, the majority of which were millennials (age 23-38 at time of purchase). We didn't open the doors to homeownership alone, we had the help of more than 35 Participating Lenders, thousands of realtors, closing attorneys, property appraisers and industry partners.

[READ MORE >](#)

BUY A HOME
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37 AVERAGE AGE	686 AVERAGE CREDIT SCORE	\$64,158 MEDIAN HOUSE HOLD INCOME	\$226,882 MEDIAN PROPERTY VALUE
372 FIRST HOMES	50% MINORITY HOMEBUYERS	38% FEMALE HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD	94% LOANS THROUGH PARTICIPATING LENDERS
			38 WHERE DID THEY BUY?

372

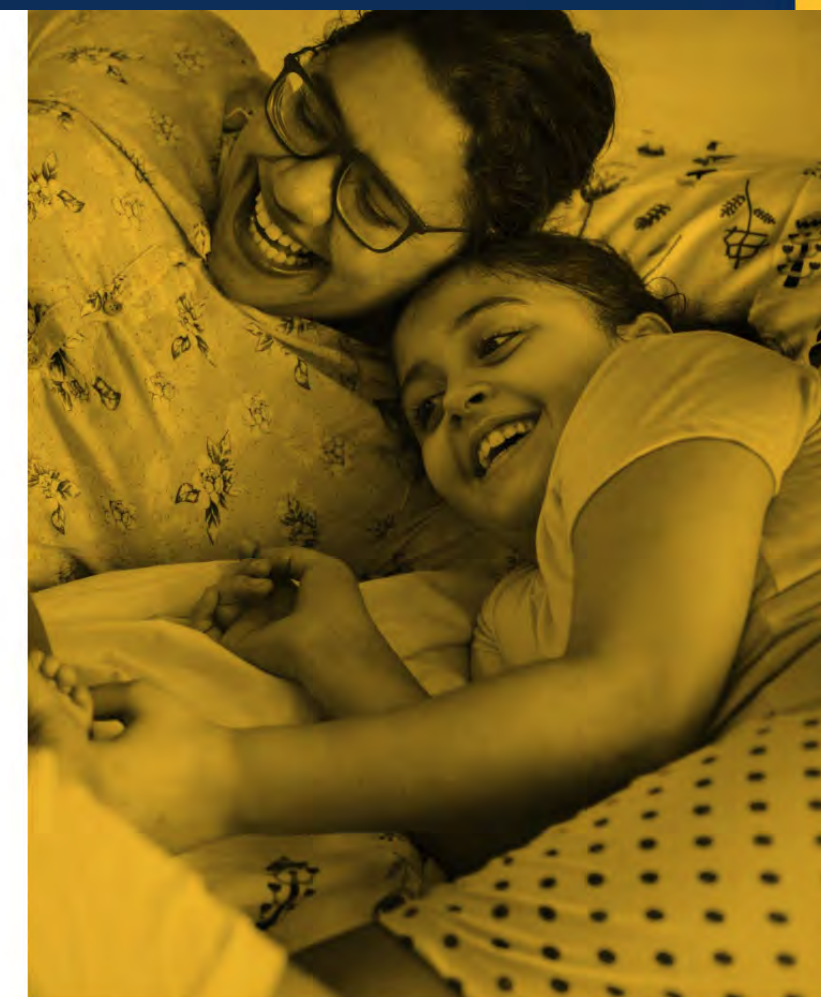
FirstHomes Tax Credits issued

which could generate an estimated \$744,000 in federal income tax savings in the first year alone.

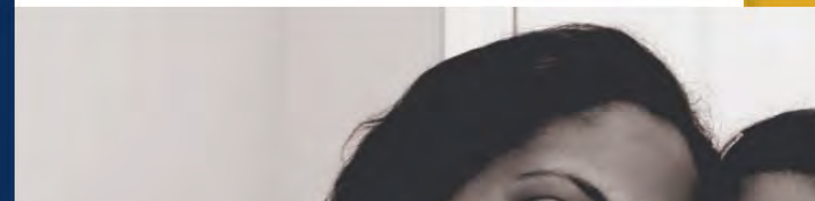
93%

homebuyers provided with Extra Assistance

Recognizing that the down payment is often the biggest hurdle to buying a home, extra assistance loans cover down payment and/or closing costs



PROVIDED SPECIAL **DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE** TO HOMEBUYERS



Groundbreakings



Elizabeth Buffum Chace Center
 Developer: [Elizabeth Buffum Chace Center](#)
 June 24, 2019
 Warwick
[See More](#)

CELEBRATING OUR PARTNERS' SUCCESS

Congratulations to our housing partners on breaking ground and celebrating the completion of 149 new and preserved affordable homes in Rhode Island! In 2019, we were privileged to support their efforts as well as join them to celebrate!

Ribbon Cuttings



RECOGNIZING OUR MANY PARTNERS

- With links to their respective websites throughout
- Highlight groundbreakings and ribbon cuttings of partner organizations

[<Back](#)

Ribbon Cutting
Shannock Falls

Developer: [Women's Development Corp \(WDC\)](#) & [Washington County Community Development Corp \(WCCDC\)](#)
 Wednesday, August 28, 2019
 Charlestown

Our annual report is an excellent way for us to shine a light on our many partners who were recognized in 2019 for their hard work. We're proud to support these innovative and creative partners and their developments!

<p>Providence Preservation Society 60 King Street, Olneyville, Providence Partner: Trinity Financial, ONE Neighborhood Builders, SWAP, Inc.</p>	<p>GrowSmart RI Outstanding Smart Growth Project Award Fernwood & Greenridge Commons, Pascoag Village, Burrillville Partner: Neighborworks Blackstone River Valley</p>	<p>RI American Planning Association (APA-RI) Paul Davidoff Award Georgiaville Village Green, Smithfield Partners: Coventry Housing Associates and Gemini Housing Corporation</p>
<p>Fan Favorite Award Kendrick-Prentice-Tirocchi House (aka Wedding Cake House) Partners: Dirt Palace, Jon Chambers Architects, Wedding Cake House Advisory Council</p>	<p>Outstanding Smart Growth Project Award 60 King Street, Olneyville, Providence Partner: Trinity Financial, ONE Neighborhood Builders, SWAP, Inc.</p>	<p>The Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless Homeless Impact Award Crossroads RI, Providence Housing Authority, and RIHousing for their collaborative effort to develop and implement the Mainstream Voucher</p>

ABOVE AND BEYOND

We're proud of our dedicated staff who go above and beyond every day to help us fulfill our mission while also committing themselves to some really great causes.

In 2019, staff donated:

- **161 lbs. of food** to the [Rhode Island Community Food Bank](#)
- **a car full of new toys** for [Toys for Tots](#)
- **5 large boxes full of new books** for [United Way of RI's children's book drive](#)
- **65 coats** for the [Coats for Kids Coat Drive](#)

and gave of their time as well:

- sorting food at the [Rhode Island Community Food Bank](#)
- serving hot meals and sorting food bags at [Amos House](#)
- helping at a [Habitat for Humanity](#) build in South County
- volunteering at the [Special Olympics Summer Games](#)

and raised over \$2,500 in Jeans Days contributions for the [Rhode Island Blood Center](#), [Special Olympics Rhode Island](#), [Make-a-Wish](#) and the [Gloria Gemma Breast Cancer Foundation](#).



CELEBRATE OUR STAFF

Recognizing and celebrating staff philanthropic efforts from throughout the year

LOOKING FORWARD

RIHousing is fortunate to have many great community and industry partners that share our deep commitment to tackling the housing issues we face. We're excited to take RIHousing into a new decade working with these partners and the great team we have at RIHousing to explore a number of new opportunities for achieving our mission.

In the months ahead, we will be launching a number of exciting efforts, including:

Outreach for contractors to assist in making homes lead safe in Rhode Island and a focus on deploying resources from our recent award of \$8.4 million in lead and healthy homes funding for homes in Pawtucket and Central Falls.

This funding, in addition to our existing [LeadSafe Homes](#) funds which are available statewide, will help current and future homeowners, tenants, and landlords make their homes safe and healthy. We're excited to work together with state and local partners to help protect families currently living in unsafe conditions while also preventing the next generation of childhood lead poisoning. We're thankful to Senator Reed in particular for his leadership on this important issue.

Supporting the creation of Zero Net Energy housing for Rhode Islanders.

This multi-agency investment will create replicable models for sustainability across our state. RIHousing is committed to developing housing that Rhode Islanders can afford. The energy efficient features in these homes will result in reduced energy costs for residents, thereby increasing their disposable income to meet other expenses.

Awarding funding from our Workforce Housing Pilot program to expand the range of housing options available in Rhode Island.

The interest in and need for these types of homes is strong, as illustrated by the over \$12 million in requests for \$7 million in available funding.

Engaging a developer to begin the process of redeveloping and transforming the Barbara Jordan II development in South Providence.

Building upon a comprehensive community engagement effort with key stakeholders, municipal officials and residents to understand community needs, the selected developer will begin the process of redevelopment to create more than 70 new rental homes.

LOOKING FORWARD

Show agency goals and upcoming projects



2019
Annual Report



When people ask us what we do, our simplest response is this: we help people find, rent, buy, keep and build homes. In essence, RIHousing's mission is to provide a range of housing options that Rhode Islanders can afford.

Our [2019 online annual report](#) shares some of the innovative ways we were able to help thousands of Rhode Islanders achieve their housing goals last year. As you'll see in the report, we didn't do this alone. We relied on a vast network of strong partners and state leadership to develop and implement programs that meet the housing needs of our state.

\$708M Impact on the Rhode Island Economy



\$375M mortgages provided to 1,726 homebuyers in 38 cities & towns



\$145M in financing to construct or rehabilitate 1,149 apartments



\$192M in rental assistance to 17,200 households



1,806 Total Jobs supported
 · 845 from mortgage lending activity
 · 961 from construction financing

We're excited to share with you our [2019 Annual Report](#) and look forward to exploring new opportunities for achieving our mission in 2020 and beyond.

[2019 Annual Report](#)



E-blast



RESPONSIVE DESIGN

Recognizing that our partners, customers and the general public would not be reading the report on their work computers (as many are working remotely and utilizing laptops, iPads, tablets and cell phones), it was important that the site be mobile responsive, look great and not lose any of its content

Check out our 2019 Annual Report: *We'll Get You Home.*