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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2022

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A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RHODE ISLAND HOUSING
RESOURCES ACT OF 1998

Introduced By: Senators Acosta, Bell, Kallman, and Cano

Date Introduced: March 01, 2022

Referred To: Senate Housing & Municipal Government

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 42-128-6, 42-128-7 and 42-128-8 of the General Laws in Chapter
2 42-128 entitled "Rhode Island Housing Resources Act of 1998" are hereby amended to read as
3 follows:

4 **42-128-6. Commission -- Membership and terms -- Officers -- Expenses -- Meetings.**

5 (a)(1) Membership. The commission shall have twenty-eight (28) members as follows: the
6 directors of departments of administration, business regulation, elderly affairs, health, human
7 services, behavioral healthcare, developmental disabilities and hospitals, the chairperson of the
8 Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation, and the attorney general, shall be ex
9 officio members; the president of the Rhode Island Bankers Association, or the designee of the
10 president; the president of the Rhode Island Mortgage Banker's Association, or the designee of the
11 president; the president of the Rhode Island Realtors Association, or the designee of the president;
12 the executive director of the Rhode Island Housing Network; the executive director of the Rhode
13 Island Coalition for the Homeless; the president of the Rhode Island Association of Executive
14 Directors for Housing, or the designee of the president; the executive director of operation stand
15 down; and thirteen (13) members who have knowledge of, and have a demonstrated interest in,
16 housing issues as they affect low-and moderate-income people, appointed by the governor with the
17 advice and consent of the senate: one of whom shall be the chairperson, one of whom shall be the
18 representative of the homeless; one of whom shall be a representative of a community development

1 corporation; one of whom shall be the representative of an agency addressing lead poisoning issues;
2 one of whom shall be a local planner; one of whom shall be a local building official; one of whom
3 shall be a representative of fair housing interests; one of whom shall be representative of an agency
4 advocating the interest of racial minorities; one of whom shall be a representative of the Rhode
5 Island Builders Association; one of whom shall be a representative of ~~insurers~~ [a Rhode Island city](#)
6 [or town with a population below twenty-five thousand \(25,000\) people according to data from the](#)
7 [United States Census Bureau](#); one of whom shall be a representative of a community development
8 intermediary that provides financing and technical assistance to housing non-profits; one of whom
9 shall be a nonprofit developer; and one of whom shall be a senior housing advocate.

10 (2) The terms of appointed members shall be three (3) years, except for the original
11 appointments, the term of four (4) of whom shall be one year and the term of four (4) of whom
12 shall be two (2) years; no member may serve more than two (2) successive terms.

13 (b) Officers. The governor shall appoint the chairperson of the commission, who shall not
14 be an ex officio member, with the advice and consent of the senate. The commission shall elect
15 annually a vice-chairperson, who shall be empowered to preside at meetings in the absence of the
16 chairperson, and a secretary.

17 (c) Expenses. The members of the commission shall serve without compensation, but shall
18 be reimbursed for their reasonable actual expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their
19 duties.

20 (d) Meetings. Meetings of the commission shall be held upon the call of the chairperson,
21 or five (5) members of the commission, or according to a schedule that may be annually established
22 by the commission; provided, however, that the commission shall meet at least once quarterly. A
23 majority of members of the commission, not including vacancies, shall constitute a quorum, and
24 no vacancy in the membership of the commission shall impair the right of a quorum to exercise all
25 the rights and perform all of the duties of the commission.

26 **42-128-7. General powers.**

27 The commission shall have the following powers, together with all powers incidental to or
28 necessary for the performance of those set forth in this chapter:

29 (1) To sue and be sued.

30 (2) To negotiate and to enter into contracts, agreements, and cooperative agreements with
31 agencies and political subdivisions of the state, not-for-profit corporations, for profit corporations,
32 and other partnerships, associations and persons for any lawful purpose necessary and desirable to
33 effect the purposes of this chapter.

34 (3) To adopt by-laws and rules for the management of its affairs and for the exercise of its

1 powers and duties, and to establish the committees, workgroups, and advisory bodies that from
2 time to time may be deemed necessary.

3 (4) To receive and accept grants or loans as may be made by the Federal government, and
4 grants, donations, contributions and payments from other public and private sources.

5 (5) To grant or loan funds to agencies and political subdivisions of the state or to private
6 groups to effect the purposes of this chapter; provided that, in each funding round, there must be a
7 material award that benefits a Rhode Island city or town with a population below twenty-five
8 thousand (25,000) people according to data from the United States Census Bureau.

9 (6) To secure the cooperation and assistance of the United States and any of its agencies,
10 and of the agencies and political subdivisions of this state in the work of the commission.

11 (7) To establish, charge, and collect fees and payments for its services.

12 **42-128-8. Powers and duties.**

13 In order to provide housing opportunities for all Rhode Islanders, to maintain the quality
14 of housing in Rhode Island, and to coordinate and make effective the housing responsibilities of
15 the agencies and subdivisions of the state, the commission shall have the following powers and
16 duties:

17 (1) Policy, planning and coordination of state housing functions. The commission shall
18 have the power and duty:

19 (i) To prepare and adopt the state's plans for housing; provided, however, that this provision
20 shall not be interpreted to contravene the prerogative of the state planning council to adopt a state
21 guide plan for housing.

22 (ii) To prepare, adopt, and issue the state's housing policy.

23 (iii) To conduct research on and make reports regarding housing issues in the state.

24 (iv) To advise the governor and general assembly on housing issues and to coordinate
25 housing activities among government agencies and agencies created by state law or providing
26 housing services under government programs.

27 (2) Establish, implement, and monitor state performance measures and guidelines for
28 housing programs. The commission shall have the power and the duty:

29 (i) To promulgate performance measures and guidelines for housing programs conducted
30 under state law.

31 (ii) To monitor and evaluate housing responsibilities established by state law, and to
32 establish a process for annual reporting on the outcomes of the programs and investments of the
33 state in housing for low and moderate income people.

34 (iii) To hear and resolve disputes pertaining to housing issues.

1 (3) Administer the programs pertaining to housing resources that may be assigned by state
2 law. The commission shall have the power and duty to administer programs for housing, housing
3 services, and community development, including, but not limited to, programs pertaining to:

4 (i) Abandoned properties and the remediation of blighting conditions.

5 (ii) Lead abatement and to manage a lead hazard abatement program in cooperation with
6 the Rhode Island housing and mortgage finance corporation.

7 (iii) Services for the homeless.

8 (iv) Rental assistance.

9 (v) Community development.

10 (vi) Outreach, education and technical assistance services.

11 (vii) Assistance, including financial support, to nonprofit organizations and community
12 development corporations.

13 (viii) Tax credits that assist in the provision of housing or foster community development
14 or that result in support to nonprofit organizations performing functions to accomplish the purposes
15 of this chapter.

16 (ix) The Supportive Services Program, the purpose of which is to help prevent and end
17 homelessness among those who have experienced long-term homelessness and for whom certain
18 services in addition to housing are essential. State funding for this program may leverage other
19 resources for the purpose of providing supportive services. Services provided pursuant to this
20 subsection may include, but not be limited to: assistance with budgeting and paying rent; access to
21 employment; encouraging tenant involvement in facility management and policies; medication
22 monitoring and management; daily living skills related to food, housekeeping and socialization;
23 counseling to support self-identified goals; referrals to mainstream health, mental health and
24 treatment programs; and conflict resolution.

25 In the administration of the programs in this subsection, the commission shall award, in
26 each funding round, a material award that benefits a Rhode Island city or town with a population
27 below twenty-five thousand (25,000) people according to data from the United States Census
28 Bureau.

29 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- RHODE ISLAND HOUSING
RESOURCES ACT OF 1998

1 This act would amend the membership of the Rhode Island Housing Resources Act of 1998
2 Commission to exclude a representative of the insurers and replace it with a representative of a
3 Rhode Island city or town with a population below twenty-five thousand (25,000) people. It would
4 also require a material award to that city or town.

5 This act would take effect upon passage.

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