

# Permanent Supportive Housing

## What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

Permanent supportive housing combines permanent affordable housing with the services needed to help people live stable, more productive lives.

Supportive housing was created as a solution to ending chronic homelessness—defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as individuals who have experienced homelessness for one year or four episodes of homelessness over a span of three years.

Services often combined with permanent supportive housing include:

- Medical and mental health care assistance
- Employment readiness and retention
- Case management
- Peer support
- Basic living skills
- Assistance with establishing family and social connections

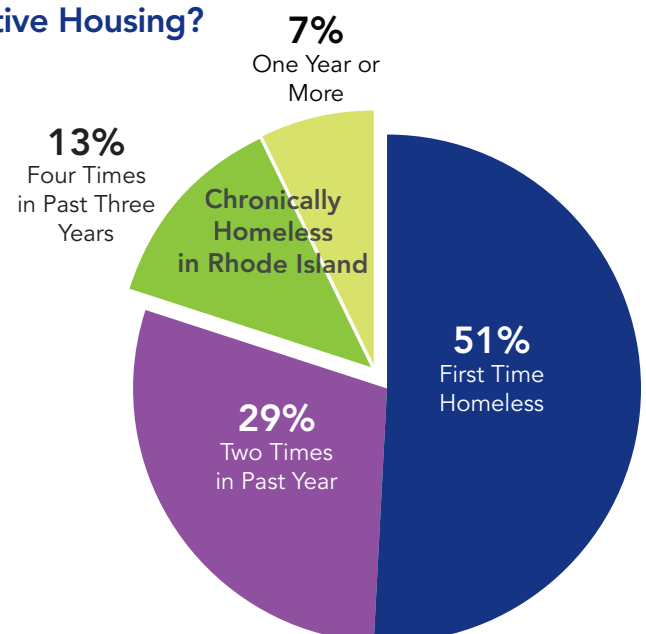


## Why Does Rhode Island Need Permanent Supportive Housing?

In 2007, Rhode Island's emergency shelters housed 3,926 individuals, including 1,293 children. In 2010 they housed 4,398 individuals, including 1,163 children.\*

National studies have shown that people experiencing chronic homelessness account for 10 to 15 percent of the homeless population, but use approximately 50 percent of the homeless services system's resources. In Rhode Island, 20 percent of the homeless population in 2010 fit into the definition of chronically homeless.

Ending chronic homelessness through the development of permanent supportive housing would allow the state's most vulnerable residents to live in safe, affordable homes and produce better outcomes in residents' lives, while saving the state money.



Source: Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) 2010

\* This Fact Sheet is an abbreviated version of the working paper *Homeless Services in Rhode Island & The Permanent Supportive Housing Model* prepared by the Corporation for Supportive Housing and HousingWorks RI. To read the paper, complete with references, please email [info@housingworksri.org](mailto:info@housingworksri.org).

## Cost Savings of Permanent Supportive Housing in Rhode Island

In 2006, with technical assistance from the Corporation for Supportive Housing and a grant from United Way of Rhode Island, the State of Rhode Island developed a pilot permanent supportive housing program called Housing First. Funded through the Rhode Island

Office of Housing and Community Development, Housing First provides permanent supportive housing to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

The program targets individuals who have been homeless an average length of 7.6 years and successfully houses them in different communities throughout Rhode Island. The annual cost savings per individual is \$8,000. These cost savings include the cost of rental subsidies and a service team that is focused on housing retention and reducing the use of emergency services.

	Prior to Housing First	After entering Housing First	Cost Savings
Hospital overnights	\$917,946	\$235,503	4 times less
Mental Health overnights	\$94,900	\$75,400	26% less
Alcohol/drug overnights	\$118,360	\$16,500	7 times less
Emergency room visits	\$96,640	\$51,840	2 times less
Jail/prison overnights	\$84,780	\$20,520	4 times less
Shelter overnights	\$205,000	\$9,600	21 times less
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,517,626</b>	<b>\$409,363</b>	<b>4 times less</b>

Source: Eric Hirsch & Irene Glasser, Rhode Island's Housing First Program Evaluation, November 2008

**As illustrated above, more money is spent cycling individuals and families through shelters and emergency systems than what it would cost to house these individuals in an affordable home with services that help them address their social and health needs.**

## Permanent Supportive Housing - Moving Forward

The economic crisis in Rhode Island has highlighted the importance of having a full continuum of affordable homes, including permanent supportive housing, as part of the state's economic development strategy and safety net. State programs like the Neighborhood Opportunities Program (NOP), are important to the success of Permanent Supportive Housing in Rhode Island because they tend to be more flexible in tenant selection than federal programs.

If Rhode Island is to benefit from the cost-savings permanent supportive housing offers, policymakers must invest in strategies that will ensure a full continuum of long-term affordable homes in our state.



*Permanent Supportive Housing in Pawtucket, RI*