



CHARTING A COURSE FOR THE FUTURE OF THE OCEAN STATE





HOPE



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A Letter from the McKee Administration

Dear Rhode Islanders,

We are proud to release the latest version of the **RI 2030 Plan**: our comprehensive policy document that charts the course for a brighter future for all Rhode Islanders—one that lifts up every resident, every community, and every corner of our state. By aligning resources, fostering partnerships, and embracing innovation, we aim to ensure sustained progress while adapting to changing needs and challenges.

Our vision is focused on four key priorities that will strengthen our state, empower our residents, and ensure a prosperous, healthy, and sustainable future. These priorities are driven and measured by data and are designed to tackle the pressing issues we face. To bring this vision to life, we are focused on strategically investing in these priorities to produce positive results.

We will actively monitor our progress by tracking the deliverables that our investments yield. Specifically, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is working directly with state agencies to prioritize the goals outlined in the 2030 Plan. OMB continues to examine and evaluate the performance data that is aligned with these measures to confirm that we are positioned to reach our goals.

We have already made great progress, and this document highlights some of the successes we've achieved thus far, but there is still work to be done. The challenges ahead are substantial, but they are ones we are fully committed to overcoming to keep Rhode Island moving in the right direction.

This being the latest iteration of the RI 2030 Plan, we note that both the plan and our strategy will adapt and change over time as we advance, learn from our successes and shortcomings, and stay attuned to the needs of Rhode Islanders. In executing this plan, we will ensure that our government remains steadfast in its efforts for:

Strengthening K-12 Education: Focusing on improving educational outcomes, expanding access to quality education, investing in year-round out-of-school learning, and modernizing school facilities prepares our children to succeed and contribute to our economy and society. Education is a cornerstone for the future of our state, and we must ensure every child has access to a high-quality education that prepares them for success in the modern world.

Building a Rhode to Prosperity: By enhancing workforce development and postsecondary education, enabling home ownership, increasing per capita personal income, and supporting small businesses drives economic growth, we will build a more prosperous Rhode Island. Our approach is comprehensive, combining innovating programs and partnerships with business leaders and labor groups, as well as investing in government programming.

Creating a Healthier Rhode Island: Focusing on a holistic approach to health and recognizing its importance to quality of life, we commit to improving family and early childhood care, accessibility to healthcare, expanding resources for physical and behavioral health, and investing in our state hospital system to build a healthier population.

Advancing Infrastructure and Energy: Investing in our roads and bridges, ports, transit, water, clean energy resilience, and digital infrastructure ensures economic vitality and environmental sustainability. We aim to enhance connectivity and reduce emissions by embracing forward-thinking infrastructure initiatives to ensure Rhode Island remains resilient and competitive for generations to come.

Underlying these efforts is our commitment to modernizing and streamlining state government to deliver these services to you in the most effective way possible. We are dedicated to improving efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness in state services, making sure that every Rhode Islander receives the support they need when they need it.

Together, these initiatives form a bold vision for Rhode Island's future—one that positions us as a leader in education, workforce development, health, and sustainability. We invite you to join us in this work as we build a stronger, more resilient Rhode Island for all.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. McKee
Governor





RI 2030 PRIORITY: STRENGTHENING K-12 EDUCATION

Education is a fundamental pillar in the McKee Administration. **Raising educational outcomes** will provide the state with a quality workforce that is ready for employment, college, and other skill training opportunities. By focusing on preparing our students to achieve their greatest potential, Rhode Island will be ready to meet future employment needs and provide businesses with well-trained employees. Expanding **out-of-school learning opportunities** and **modernizing school facilities** are essential steps toward fostering an environment where students can thrive both inside and outside the classroom. These initiatives will help address learning disparities, promote continuous skill development, and create spaces that support 21st-century education. Education is vital to our economic security and growth, serving as a catalyst for innovation and competitiveness in a rapidly changing job market. Investing in education today ensures a brighter future for our communities and the state's overall prosperity.

RHODE ISLAND'S PROGRESS

Expanding Year-Round Out-Of-School Learning Opportunities

- Launched the **Learn365RI** initiative to expand learning opportunities beyond the traditional 180-day school year and add 1 million hours of learning time across Rhode Island. Through this initiative, state, municipal, school, business, and community leaders are working toward three main goals: (1) improving English Language Arts (ELA) and math RICAS scores, (2) increasing FAFSA completion rates, and (3) reducing chronic absenteeism. Learn365RI programs have included school vacation learning camps, after-school tutoring programs, and attendance incentives—all in support of Governor McKee's goal: "In every home, every day, learning matters."

- » Entered into **Learn365RI Municipal Compacts** with 38 out of 39 Rhode Island communities who committed to expanding high-quality, year-round learning for students. The state distributed nearly \$3.8 million in Advancing Learning Beyond the 180-Day School Year grants to support these endeavors.
- » Directed \$81.7 million in federal funds to help municipalities create **Community Learning Centers**. These centers will help foster a culture of continuous learning and contribute to the goals of adding 1 million hours of learning time per year across our state to improve educational outcomes, support workforce development efforts to

increase per capita income, and encourage healthy living. The learning centers will be completed by October 31, 2026.

- » Awarded 21 grants to municipalities, totaling nearly \$4 million in federal funds, for school districts to enhance educational programming by fostering new or expanding partnerships between local education agencies (LEAs) and community-based organizations to provide after-school learning and enrichment opportunities for students in alignment with the report and recommendations of the Learning, Equity and Accelerated Pathways (LEAP) Task Force.



*Every Home. Every Day.
Learning Matters.*

- » Continued investment in the Learn365RI initiative in the FY 2025 enacted budget, providing an additional \$5 million for municipal grants that support high-quality, out-of-school time programming, with an emphasis on critical skill development. Of this sum, \$3 million will go toward a competitive grant application with a focus on mathematics, and \$2 million will go toward startup grants to proposed Community Learning Centers.



- Championed an unprecedented statewide strategy to address chronic absenteeism. The **Attendance Matters RI** campaign is an all-hands-on-deck initiative that emphasizes the importance of daily attendance, highlights the consequences of chronic absenteeism, and energizes students, families, and educators to promote good attendance. To help identify chronic absenteeism, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has released new and improved data tools that track and illuminate trends to assist schools, districts, and municipal leaders statewide to develop and launch targeted interventions.
 - » Created a public website, the **Student Attendance Leaderboard**, that displays up-to-date absenteeism data for every Rhode Island public school. Rhode Island is the first and only state in the nation to have an online attendance board that updates daily.
 - » Reduced Rhode Island’s chronic **absenteeism rate to 24.7 percent** in 2023-2024, the lowest it has been since the onset of the pandemic—equaling **244,375 fewer absences** than the previous school year and totaling **over 1.3 million more learning hours**.
 - » **Lowered chronic absenteeism in 89 percent of the state’s 64 school districts** from the previous year and 82 percent in Rhode Island schools.
 - » Grew Attendance Matters RI beyond the traditional stakeholders, partnering with local businesses to encourage and reward student attendance through incentives and special events. As part of this initiative, RIDE also established a **Chronic Absenteeism Working Group**, made up of a diverse body of partners from various sectors, including but not limited to education, health, government, business, law enforcement, and community organizations.
- Launched the **FAFSA Support Ambassador Grant Program** to provide important application assistance during the summer months, helping students navigate the financial aid process and pave the way for their success in higher education.
 - » Continued to position Rhode Island as one of the **top completers of the application**, ranking 7th in submissions per the United States Department of Education and 12th in completions per the National College Attainment Network in 2024.
- Continued to **shrink the RICAS/MCAS performance gap** with Massachusetts. Compared to 2020-2021 RICAS results, 2023-2024 scores closed the ELA performance gap by 34.4 percent and the math performance gap by 18.8 percent.
- Announced \$5 million in funding for **instructional coaching in mathematics and ELA**; the funding is part of the FY 2025 budget. These funds will cover the hiring of 26 full-time and 9 part-time coaches for a total of 35 instructional coaches across 24 LEAs.

Modernizing School Facilities and Supporting Teachers



- Championed and passed a **\$250 million statewide school construction bond** in 2022 to ensure that students are learning in modern facilities that support their needs. The School Building Authority collaborates with municipalities and school districts on a variety of school construction projects, from teardowns and new builds to renewal and modernization.
- Invested \$30 million in additional funding for **School Building Authority’s Facility Equity Initiative (FEI)**, ensuring underserved school communities receive an equitable share of state school construction funding by prioritizing funds for the districts with the highest reimbursement rates and need.
- Launched the \$15 million **21st Century Technology and Equipment Fund**, providing innovative technology and equipment that foster a STEM project-based learning approach and Career and Technical Education pathways that ensure all students have access to high-quality learning spaces.



- Sustained the **Wavemaker Fellowship program** to provide student loan reimbursement to recent college graduates who teach in Rhode Island K-12 schools.
- Partnered with University Instructors to launch a free, comprehensive preparation program to help teacher candidates pass Praxis tests, which is a key step toward teacher certification in Rhode Island.
- Launched **Educate401.org**, an online recruitment and resource hub for current and prospective educators. The website offers a clear and user-friendly certification roadmap that guides aspiring teachers through the process of becoming certified educators in Rhode Island.
- Awarded \$7.5 million in RIDE’s Learning Inside Out Outdoor Classroom grants supporting 89 projects across 29 LEAs aimed to create, enhance, and support access to natural resources for all students in the form of outdoor classrooms or schoolyard habitats. An additional \$500,000 is supporting professional development throughout the state in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Investing in All Students

- Launched a new partnership with RIDE, the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), and Hazel Health to expand access to **comprehensive, virtual mental health services to students across the state**. Rhode Island is now on track to become the first state on the East Coast to launch a statewide telehealth initiative of this kind. This new service will not replace current school and district-level efforts but rather complement them.
- Allocated an additional \$7.4 million in the FY 2025 enacted budget to support **Multilingual Learners (MLL)**, increasing the additional

percentage of the Core Instruction Amount for each student in the three lowest English proficiency categories for MLLs to 20 percent.

- Reimagined the **high school experience and graduation requirements** to better meet the needs of all students by updating Secondary Regulations.
 - » Engaged stakeholders throughout K-12 education in an 18-month collaborative process to develop and adopt updated secondary regulations that establish statewide graduation requirements. These regulations establish college and career-ready coursework as the default expectation for every child in Rhode Island regardless of where they live, their parent’s income, the language they speak at home, or their disability status. They also recommend the inclusion of real-world relevant learning experiences such as civics, financial literacy, and computer science as graduation requirements.
- Included additional supports in the FY 2024 budget to help districts manage changes in their demographics from one year to the next, including **poverty loss stabilization** and an **enrollment loss transition fund**, which provided two years of funding to districts experiencing enrollment declines.
- Supported students’ nutritional needs by annually investing to transition students in Rhode Island schools from being eligible for reduced-price breakfast and lunch to receiving both meals at no cost.
- Expanded RIDE’s **All Course Network (ACN)** in FY 2024 and FY 2025, which offers enrichment and credit-bearing opportunities for PreK-12 students in a wide range of topics, including Cybersecurity Fundamentals, AP Psychology, Computer-Aided Design (CAD), PSAT and SAT



prep, and Food Truck Entrepreneurship. The ACN serves nearly 4,000 students through more than 8,200 learning experiences each school year. All districts participate in the network, with courses offered by 24 provider organizations in FY 2024.

- Established the **LEAP District Support Program and Task Force**, which provided a framework guiding Rhode Island’s post-pandemic acceleration agenda and addressing concerns with learning recovery. Program participants were eligible for matching funds from a pool of more than \$20 million to invest in programs that accelerated student learning and provided specialized supports.
- Awarded 12 high-need LEAs with \$4.8 million in **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) Stronger Connections Grant program** federal subgrants to establish strategies and carry out activities that will help increase students’ sense of belonging and safety. Strategies and activities are focused on violence, harm, inclusion, belonging, mental health, and social-emotional wellness.
- Supported the holistic needs of students through \$10 million in federal funds to recruit and retain mental health service providers who can further support student well-being and the \$3 million **W.E.L.L. Initiative** (Wellness in Education Leads to Learning), which will support the development of wellness spaces in schools statewide, allowing students and staff to experience a quiet atmosphere and have a chance to decompress.
- Encouraged students to explore their creativity through a \$5 million **Art Reengages Talent in All Students (ARTS) Initiative**, providing every Rhode Island public and charter school with funds to support arts in their schools, including culinary, visual and media arts, performing arts, and design.
- Signed a multitude of bills into law that invest in education and support our students and teachers, including assisting LEAs in implementing a dual language immersion program, implementing trauma-informed practices in schools throughout the state, and revising the fast-track principal certification program to require a course in program evaluation (including data analysis) and to build leadership skills that support teaching and learning.
- Created the **Young Leaders Advisory Group**, which invites young adults to engage with Rhode Island leaders, share their perspectives, and discuss government and public policy. The group consists of approximately 60 young adults who meet with Governor McKee and special guests biweekly to engage in roundtable discussions.



Expanding Career and Technical Education Opportunities

- Offered 300 RIDE-approved **Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs** housed in all high schools, postsecondary institutions, adult skills training facilities, or CTE centers across the state. This is a 91-percent increase in programming since the 2015-2016 school year.
 - » Measured a 23.5 percent compounding annual growth rate in annual enrollment in CTE related courses, from 5,485 students in 2017 to 19,483 students in 2023.
 - » Achieved higher CTE student performance on national assessments and a higher four-year CTE student graduation rate compared to their non-CTE peers.
 - » Managed postsecondary partnerships between CTE programs and colleges and universities across Rhode Island.
 - » Developed a new online visual dashboard that showcases CTE programs across the state of Rhode Island, as well as a data dashboard that makes CTE Accountability data easier to view and understand.
- **Founded the Menu for Success Student Food Truck Initiative**, granting 15 LEAs a food truck and associated supports to provide students with career-ready skills in entrepreneurship, culinary arts, automotive learning, and graphic design.
- Opened the **CTE Comprehensive Equity Grant program**, which aims to close equity gaps and create opportunities for MLLs, who have not historically participated in high-quality CTE programs.
- Invested \$6.9 million to renovate a health-career classroom space at Davies Career and Technical School.



THE ROAD TO RI 2030: K-12 EDUCATION GOALS

- **Reach or exceed Massachusetts' educational outcomes** by 2030 and **add one million hours of out-of-school learning time** per year through the Learn365RI and the Community Learning Centers initiatives, while making progress in these key areas:
 - » Improving RICAS math and ELA scores.
 - » Boosting student attendance.
 - » Improving FAFSA completion rates.
 - Ensure that all students graduate high school with a **game plan for accessible and sustainable success** through higher education or preparation to enter the workforce.
 - Ensure that all students have **access to high-quality and personalized support from adults**, both during the school day and through extended learning partnerships for before school, after school, and summer learning opportunities.
 - Universally screen all students academically, socially, and emotionally, and align resources to those needs.
 - Continue to turnaround Providence Public Schools and establish a strong foundation to transition the district back to local control
- after goals of the Turnaround Action Plan, which was crafted with significant input from the community, have been met.
- Continue to **strengthen the instruction of core subjects** (ELA, mathematics, and science) by providing local school districts with high-quality instructional materials, focusing particularly on multilingual learners and others who need additional support and providing professional learning for educators to support curriculum implementation.
 - Provide funds for schools to update physical buildings with better HVAC equipment.
 - Continue to build **CTE programs** designed to provide students with the academic and experiential skills to be equipped to succeed in a range of high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers.
 - Collaborate with the early learning sector to ensure coordination and alignment in order to improve transitions and ensure all students enter kindergarten on a path to reading proficiently.





RI 2030 PRIORITY: BUILDING A RHODE TO PROSPERITY

The McKee Administration is laser-focused on working to **raise incomes for all Rhode Islanders** through a wide-reaching initiative called **Rhode to Prosperity**. Rhode Island has momentum because we are investing in our state’s greatest assets – our people and our businesses. We are elevating **higher education programs** to guarantee that all Rhode Islanders have access to quality education that is closely aligned with industry demands. In addition to traditional education pathways, we recognize the importance of work-based training programs as vital alternatives for those looking to enter the workforce more quickly.

Well-designed **workforce development programs** help both workers and employers by providing workers with in-demand skills and training necessary for an ever-changing economy. The state plays a critical role in coordinating these training programs to match the skills needed by employers with the workers looking for better pay and better career opportunities. Effective workforce development programs are crucial to the state’s regional economic development strategy.

In tandem, we are prioritizing **housing development and homeownership initiatives** that offer affordable and sustainable options, laying the foundation for long-term financial stability and prosperity. This commitment to stability enhances our broader economic strategies, creating a supportive environment for growth. We further foster economic growth through targeted capital investments and robust support for small businesses, cultivating a dynamic environment for innovation and job creation. By integrating these efforts, we are building a comprehensive ecosystem that improves the quality of life for every resident.

RHODE ISLAND’S PROGRESS

Enhancing Workforce Development and Postsecondary Education

Investing In Higher Education and Upskilling Programs

- Passed a **\$160.5-million higher education facilities bond** on the November 2024 ballot to provide students with the cutting-edge technology and classrooms they need to compete in the 21st-century workforce. The bond offers \$87.5 million to build the **University of Rhode Island (URI) Life Sciences Building** and \$73 million to support the **Rhode Island College (RIC) Institute for Cybersecurity and Emerging Technologies**.
- Established the **Hope Scholarship Pilot Program** at RIC, a last-dollar tuition and mandatory fee scholarship for in-state students during their third and fourth year at RIC. The Hope Scholarship offers another pathway to quality, affordable

postsecondary education to students. The FY 2025 enacted budget accepted Governor McKee’s proposal to extend this program until 2030.

- » In the 2023-2024 academic year, 357 students were eligible for the Hope Scholarship. Of those, 245 received Hope funds. The remaining 112 had enough other financial aid to not need Hope funds. It is projected that there will be between 352-409 Hope Scholars in academic year 2024-2025.
- Signed legislation making the **RI Promise Scholarship program** permanent. The program provides free tuition to the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) for all Rhode Island full-time students who graduated the term before.





- Created the **Fresh Start Scholarship** at CCRI, providing scholarships to Rhode Island residents who previously attended CCRI and have not yet earned an associate degree.
 - » Enrolled 1,400 students in the 2023-2024 academic year as part of the Fresh Start Scholarship.
- Founded the **Institute for Cybersecurity and Emerging Technologies** at RIC, providing certificate, bachelor's, and master's level courses with a focus on research and developing highly-skilled cybersecurity professionals. As of August 2024, there are nearly 100 declared majors in the program.
- Allocated \$2.7 million in FY 2025 to the **Real Skills for Youth program**, which supports partnerships consisting of schools, youth organizations, employers, and others to develop and implement high-quality, paid, work-based learning activities for high school students and career exploration for our middle-school youth.
- Increased funding by \$8 million in FY 2024 for the **RI Reconnect program** to improve postsecondary degree and credential attainment among underserved, working-age Rhode Islanders. Staff known as Educational Navigators work with adult residents to address barriers to education and workforce training completion and help them navigate changing careers, learning a new trade, or getting on the path to a degree or certificate.
 - » Completed the RI Reconnect assessment process for almost 2,000 Rhode Islanders between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024.
- Made significant investments in **infrastructure across Rhode Island's public colleges**, including \$189.1 million for renovations at URI's Narragansett Bay Campus to grow the blue economy, \$65.8 million for CCRI to modernize and renovate academic and student support spaces at their four campuses, and \$67.7 million for infrastructure modernization at RIC.
- Continued to invest in **Building Futures: Building Green Futures program**, a pre-apprenticeship program to prepare young adults with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in registered apprenticeships in green and plant-based industries, construction, and beyond. Upon graduation, participants have the opportunity to seek employment in these industries or participate in Building Futures' construction pre-apprenticeship program.
- Invested in over 15 new training programs through **Real Jobs RI** in 2023-2024, covering a diverse range of trades. This sector-based workforce development programming provides targeted education and skills training for workers with the aim of ensuring employers have access to employees with the necessary skills to compete and grow.
- Signed the **Apprenticeship Pathways to Earning a Bachelor's Degree Act** into law, which enables an individual to earn credits through apprenticeship that can be applied toward a bachelor's degree at public higher education institutions.
- Signed the **College and Career Success For All Students Act**, which aims to enhance student preparedness for postsecondary education and careers. It mandates teacher training and outlines responsibilities for the state board of regents to support this objective.
- Created a **Youth Employment Resource page** through the Governor's Workforce Board on the Department of Labor and Training (DLT) website that includes a list of Youth Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act providers, active Real Skills for Youth trainings, information on child labor laws, and additional resources.
 - » The Governor's Workforce Board also leverages the **Career Exploration Equity Grant program** to support equitable access to high-quality career exploration opportunities for youth and young adults. The grant provides a 100-percent reimbursement for eligible activities and costs up to \$5,000 per calendar year, to K-12 schools and community-based organizations.
 - As of September 2024, 33 grants totaling \$112,435 have been awarded to public schools, community-based organizations, and charter schools. These grants support career exploration programs for youth, including STEM activities, field trips to colleges and training facilities, internship opportunities, and more.



Expanding Employment Opportunities



- Reached Rhode Island's lowest unemployment rate on record of **2.6 percent** in May and June 2023. Rhode Island **recovered all the jobs** lost since the February 2020 pandemic peak in December of 2023. In July 2024, the **state's labor force reached its highest level on record, at 592,100**. As of November 2024, the state reached a **record-high count of 515,000 jobs**.
- Implemented **401 Works**, an innovative initiative that allowed unemployment recipients to earn more and keep more of their benefits while returning to work part-time. The program, which was implemented to help Rhode Islanders recover from the pandemic, effectively keeps more people connected to the workforce, so they rely less on benefits and exit unemployment faster.
- Hosted more than **117 virtual and in-person job fairs** and had more than 8,000 jobseekers attend a job coach session through DLT from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.
- Leveraged the new **Non-Trade Apprenticeship Expansion Grant program** to support the expansion of Non-Trade/Non-Traditional Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) that meet the standards of apprenticeship. Since 2023, grants have been awarded to the Rhode Island Institute for Labor Studies to develop apprenticeship program standards for teachers and medical assistants.
- Provided Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) services to 355 individuals between June 2023 and June 2024 who self-reported as having a disability.
 - » The **Workplace Accessibility Grant Program**, managed by the **Governor's Workforce Board**, promotes employment and economic opportunity for individuals with disabilities through investment in accessible workplaces.
 - Awarded \$31,632 to eight employers in 2023 for workplace accessibility projects, including adding a portable wheelchair ramp, countertop modifications, ADA-Compliant Doors, front entrance railings, accessible bathrooms, and ramp installations.
 - Awarded \$33,040 to six employers for similar projects as of August 2024.
- Continued the **partnership between DLT and the Department of Corrections (DOC)** to bring new employment opportunities to adult correctional facilities through one-on-one coaching.
 - » Through an on-site job coaching initiative, assisted currently incarcerated participants with career coaching, resume assistance, interview preparation, and connection to wrap-around essential services.
 - » Hosted a hiring event where inmates were able to come to DLT and meet virtually with employers while still incarcerated.
 - » Recruited fair-chance employers in the manufacturing, transportation, and shipping industries, and supplied the virtual platform, secure laptops, and closed internet access for training. Three participants received on-the-spot post-release offers.
- Partnered with DLT, DOC, and CCRI to provide **sector-based in-demand trainings**, including an innovative program launched in 2022 to bring advanced manufacturing training to the women's correctional facility. Participants are trained on on-site CAD machines and earn an OSHA 10 Certificate and a Certified Logistics Technician (CLT) certificate.
 - » Successfully launched three program cohorts as of September 2024, totaling 22 participants, of whom 20 successfully completed the program and 10 were placed into jobs upon release.
- Established a **partnership between the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and Skills for RI** to form the Rising Environmental Leaders program, bringing high school students into DEM for a summer program to learn about career and professional opportunities in environmental protection and natural resource stewardship.



Ensuring Equitable Access and Employee Protections

- Dedicated funding for DLT to establish the **Office of Community Engagement (OCE)** to lead the agency's commitment to and strategy for being a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. In 2023, an advisory panel of 25 community-based organizations provided ongoing input on how the state can better serve members of the community. In 2024, the initiative entered its second year of programming, onboarding seven new community-based organizations, representing key voices absent from the first year.
 - » Created a step-by-step brochure on how to apply for Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI), which community partners translated into other languages and disseminated to their clients.
 - » Shared strategies to avoid medical bias in TDI claims.
 - » Created a UI help form so that community partners can directly refer their clients to timely one-on-one assistance with their claim from a UI representative.
 - » Created flyers advertising DLT services and how to access those services, which were disseminated to the clients of the community partners.
 - » Created a survey to gather information about the most-needed employment services and how those services can be accessed. Responses confirmed that employment services offered by DLT are in high demand, and DLT will engage in further research to determine how to advertise those services best and work with existing community partners for seamless delivery to clients.
 - » Started the process of cultivating recruitment partnerships between Real Jobs RI training providers and community partners, so that community partner clients have better access to free training opportunities, and training programs have more diverse cohorts.
- Increased the number of bilingual staff available to help unemployment claimants and job seekers. UI hired 14 new bilingual staff across the UI and TDI programs since the award of the U.S. Department of Labor equity grant in 2022. Workforce Development Services partnered with

the Rhode Island Department of Administration (DOA) to create a new multilingual career coach position in the DLT career centers. As of September 2024, DLT has hired five bilingual career coaches.

- Provided funding and access to higher education opportunities for teachers of color at the Rhode Island School for Progressive Education.
- Recovered \$890,573.41 in back wages and penalties for impacted Rhode Island workers through DLT's Workplace Fraud Unit in 2023.
- Signed the **Pay Equity Act, the Fight for 15, Wage Theft, and the extension of 401 Works** into law to ensure fair compensation and raising per capita income across Rhode Island.





THE ROAD TO RI 2030: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION GOALS

- Create 5,000 new state-funded **work-based-learning** opportunities by 2030.
- Sustain investments in Rhode Island's future workforce through **new CTE programming and expanded dual enrollment**.
- Increase investments in **workforce development initiatives**, such as Real Jobs RI.
- Bolster Rhode Island's Office of Apprenticeship. Rhode Island must expand equitable access to the skilled workforce and, further, **increase programming in the trades**, particularly with the federal investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This includes expanding work in the more traditional trades, like construction and steel work, but also investing heavily in blue economy trades like wind and solar.
- Continue to expand **programming and supports for individuals with disabilities** to access workforce development programs and secure meaningful employment opportunities.
- Increase alignment and coordination between state agencies to **expand pathways to careers in clean energy, sustainability, renewables, ocean technology, and resiliency** by working with the Governor's Workforce Board's Green Energy Workforce Advisory Committee to identify and pursue funding opportunities, establish career exploration programming for youth, and expanding access to apprenticeships in the green and blue economy.
- Continue to focus on aligning the system of **reskilling and upskilling** Rhode Island's workforce programming with employer demand.
- Increase the percentage of Rhode Islanders with **postsecondary degrees** to the level of its southern New England neighbors and increase the percentage of Rhode Islanders with postsecondary credentials.
- Establish a coordinated approach between Rhode Island's higher education facilities and targeted industry clusters, creating a network of **innovation campuses**.
- Address issues created by an aging workforce by intentionally **connecting young Rhode Islanders to work and career opportunities** and promoting inward migration of workers.

Improving the Housing Ecosystem and Prioritizing Homeownership

Accelerating Housing Production and Growing Homeownership

- Passed a **\$120-million housing** bond on the November 2024 ballot to make housing more affordable and accessible to Rhode Islanders; 65.5 percent of voters approved this ballot measure. As the largest housing bond in Rhode Island's history, this bond would provide \$80 million for affordable housing, \$20 million for homeownership programs, \$10 million for acquisition and revitalization, \$5 million for site acquisition, \$4 million for housing-related infrastructure, and \$1 million for municipal planning.
- Allocated \$219 million in federal State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) for the **production and preservation of housing units** in the FY 2023-2025 enacted budgets.
 - » Awarded funding to help finance over 2,300 units as of October 2024, including over 1,900 homes that are affordable and over 180 middle income units.
 - » Established new and innovative grant programs, including the **Priority Projects Fund**, which supports projects that are difficult to complete with conventional financing and prioritize vulnerable populations such as lower income Rhode Islanders, older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans.
 - » Added new funding to well-established and much-needed housing architecture.
- Established a \$30-million **Statewide Down Payment Assistance Program** with SFRF to provide first-time homebuyers in Rhode Island with grants to assist with down



payment and closing costs, often some of the greatest hurdles individuals and families face during the process of purchasing a home.

- » Helped over **1,600 families and individuals become new homeowners** across 35 of Rhode Island's 39 municipalities through this key resource, which helps first-time homebuyers facing a challenging housing market. Over 40 percent of these grant beneficiaries were minority households. All funds were spent as of July 2024.
 - Created the first-ever **State Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (S-LIHTC)** in Rhode Island, which provides a tax incentive for developers to expand housing options for low-income households and has a statewide annual allocation of up to \$30 million.
 - Signed a housing legislation package aimed at **producing more homes for Rhode Islanders at every income level** by streamlining and removing obstacles in the planning, zoning, and development processes at the municipal level, including legislation that allows homeowners the right to develop accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on their property.
 - » Increased **municipal permitting activity** to 2,453 residential units in 2023, according to Housing Works RI's building permit survey. This is more than a 1,000-unit increase from 2022 and is the largest number of residential units permitted in a single year since 2005 (just before the Great Recession).
 - Established the **Municipal Fellows Program**, a new housing development-focused initiative, to provide support to cities and towns with planning, zoning, and/or development capacity to increase housing development.
 - Developed a **Home Repair Program** to assist homeowners in distressed areas with necessary residential repair and rehabilitation costs, including electrical, heating, energy improvements, accessibility improvements, roofing repair/replacement, lead hazard reduction, and plumbing improvements.
 - Developed the **Turnkey Affordable Homeownership Program** to help address the need for increased affordable homeownership opportunities in Rhode Island and to streamline the process for the development of low-to moderate-income homes. The RIHousing program will provide gap financing to developers once a Certificate of Occupancy is obtained and a deed-restriction is recorded, incentivizing developers to build affordable units with minimal regulatory involvement by RIHousing during construction.
 - Developed and launched a **Public Housing Pilot Program**, which offers financing for public housing authorities to increase the supply of affordable homes and stabilize the supply of existing affordable housing. This program has provided financing for three developments in Narragansett, Newport, and Pawtucket. Additionally, this program has authorized seven technical assistance and predevelopment grants to bolster the pipeline of potential public housing units that can be developed or repositioned.
 - Signed legislation updating the definition of sexual orientation in regard to fair housing practices and **eliminated an exemption that allowed discrimination based on gender identity** or expression in owner-occupied buildings of three units or less, ensuring Rhode Island continues to be a more equitable and inclusive state for its LGBTQ+ community.
 - Increased affordable homeownership opportunities across Rhode Island for first-time homebuyers at or below 100 percent of area median income (AMI) through RIHousing's **Homeownership Investment Fund**. As of October 1, 2024, the program has funded \$4.8 million for 72 units across 11 municipalities.
 - Provided over \$1.8 million in assistance to 73 homebuyers across 12 municipalities through RIHousing's **FirstGenHomeRI program**, which offers \$25,000 in down payment and/or closing cost assistance for first-generation homebuyers living in Central Falls, East Providence, Pawtucket, Woonsocket and parts of Providence and Newport. The assistance is a grant that does not need to be repaid if the homeowner keeps their home for five years as their primary residence.
 - Invested \$18 million in **Crossroads Rhode Island's Summer Street Apartments development**, which will create 176 new permanent supportive housing units for households experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness with incomes at or below 30 percent AMI.
- ## Developing and Implementing a Statewide Housing Strategy
- Established the Department of Housing as a new state agency and appointed a Cabinet-level Secretary of Housing, underscoring a strategic shift towards prioritizing housing and ensuring a collaborative, statewide approach to addressing housing and homelessness challenges, increasing housing production and homeownership across Rhode Island, and having a comprehensive approach to supporting community development.



- Initiated the development of a **comprehensive statewide housing plan** which will provide an in-depth analysis of Rhode Island’s current housing landscape as well as a roadmap of the state’s long-term strategy for housing.
 - » Conducted individual meetings with all 39 municipalities, with the Department of Housing leading discussions on housing needs, concerns, and barriers.
- Activated the Rhode Island Housing Development Corporation, a subsidiary of RIHousing, to collaborate proactively with municipalities and other stakeholders to identify properties suitable for housing development and to provide the assistance necessary to move projects forward and accelerate the pace of production.

THE ROAD TO RI 2030: HOUSING AND HOMEOWNERSHIP GOALS

- Increase availability of safe, quality, and attainable housing in all 39 cities and towns. Strategically **increase housing inventory across the continuum**, from permanent supportive housing to market-rate homeownership units.
- Reduce barriers to homeownership and bridge the racial and income-based divide in homeownership.
- Collaborate with municipalities to **reduce zoning and planning practices** to increase housing production.
- Improve the quality and availability of data on housing to inform Rhode Island’s long-term statewide housing plans.
- Focus on investment tools and resources that **reduce the cost and burden of housing development** and enhance the feasibility of projects.
- Expand workforce development opportunities for carpenters, plumbers, electricians, and others in the construction workforce.
- Expand opportunities for financial literacy and homebuyer training, homeowner counseling, and mortgage assistance products.
- Identify state-owned land that is usable for housing development.

Supporting Small Businesses and Creating a Competitive Tax Environment

- Permanently **eliminated the car tax** in FY 2024.
- Championed **reforming the tangible tax** by signing legislation capping the rate at 2022 levels and creating a statewide exemption of \$50,000, effectively eliminating the tax for 75 percent of Rhode Island businesses.
- Submitted a balanced budget for FY 2026 that closes an approximately \$400 million deficit without any broad-based tax increases or cuts to critical services programs upon which Rhode Islanders rely.
- Repealed various nuisance fees – such as the liquor manufacturers duplicate fee and the sales-and-use tax exemption fee – that are a burden to residents and businesses paying them.
- Invested in the **Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP)**, leveraging millions in loans from state appropriations since its inception. SBAP supports businesses with fewer than 200 employees that are having difficulty obtaining financing from traditional lending organizations, by capitalizing third-party lenders, including those with expertise in microloans, to provide access to capital. State funding is leveraged to provide access to additional lenders’ funds or provide technical assistance.
- Supported and renewed the **Relief Grant** (2021) and **RI Rebounds** (2022 – present) programs, which have provided more than 6,000 grant awards to small businesses and supported more than 1,000 businesses with ventilation, energy efficiency, technical assistance, and take it outside support.
 - » Through the second phase of the RI Rebounds Technical Assistance program, provided direct services to nearly 1,000 Rhode Island small businesses, covering over 70,000 hours of service. This program provided support with legal, accounting, and business planning services as well as marketing and website development to help businesses grow and thrive in the state.





- Advanced the **SupplyRI initiative**, a program designed to increase in-state procurement by connecting large-scale purchasers (called Anchors) with local suppliers in Rhode Island and providing training to empower small and diverse suppliers to compete for business effectively. The FY 2024 and FY 2025 budgets enhanced funding for the program by \$1.75 million. The program is poised to accelerate its focus on supplier readiness assistance, enabling businesses to grow and scale within the Rhode Island marketplace.

- » Helped facilitate \$427 million in in-state procurement by fostering partnerships and expanding its Anchor network to include the growing offshore wind industry.
- » Continued to increase opportunities for diverse suppliers, with nearly 450 minority-, women- or veteran-owned businesses registered in the program.

- Deposited \$100 million of SFRF into the **UI Trust Fund**, saving businesses \$12.2 million and shoring up the fund in the event of a future downturn. The pandemic severely depleted the UI Trust Fund, leading to higher employer tax rates. This SFRF investment, combined with Rhode Island's historic economic growth, has restored the fund to a stable and sustainable level.

- Directed \$4.4 million into the Workers Compensation Fund to **prevent an increase in the premiums** paid by Rhode Island businesses.

- **Ended the litter tax** for small businesses.

- Provided Rhode Islanders with a rebate for the 4-percent gross receipts tax on their electric bills and 3-percent gross receipts tax on their natural gas bills between December 2023 and March 2024. This resulted in **\$35.6 million in total energy relief for families and businesses**.

- Included three distinct programs in **RI's Innovation Initiative** as of FY 2025.

- » Provided Innovation Voucher grants for small business research and development conducted in partnership with a local "knowledge provider" (typically an institution of higher education) or in-house for manufacturers. The maximum voucher award was increased from \$50,000 to \$75,000 in the FY 2024 budget. As of September 2024, 130 voucher awards have been made.
- » Through the Network Matching Grant program, supported intermediary organizations working to provide Rhode Island's small businesses with technical assistance, access to capital, or space on flexible terms.
- » Added the Invention Incentive program to the FY 2025 budget to provide grants up to \$5,000 to small businesses and individuals to reduce barriers to filing a patent application.



- Launched the **Minority Business Accelerator program** to support minority-owned businesses by offering partnerships to Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) and Women's Business Enterprises (WBEs) for technical assistance. The state also launched a competitive direct grant program to support MBEs and WBEs that successfully complete technical assistance.

- » Supported almost 1,000 businesses as of August 2024 through the Minority Business Accelerator's technical assistance partnerships.
- » Partnered with DOA's Division of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (DEDI) to help ensure eligible businesses are registered with the state as qualified WBEs/MBEs and reached out through intermediaries to recruit additional businesses to register.
- » Certified 61 small businesses through the MBE and WBE programs as of December 2024.
- » Launched a pilot program offering tailored technical assistance, pre-bid support, networking opportunities between businesses and buyers, and direct procurement training.
- » Allocated a budget of \$500,000 to conduct a comprehensive and practical statewide disparity study. The study aims to assess the participation of minority, women, disadvantaged, and veteran vendors in state contracting. It will include an availability analysis to evaluate the presence of ready, willing, and able minority and women business enterprises within the Rhode Island market. The study is scheduled to begin in 2025. According to the statute, disparity studies must be completed every five years.

THE ROAD TO RI 2030: SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES AND COMPETITIVE TAX GOALS

- Addressing the state’s structural budget deficit with **no broad-based tax increases** that will significantly harm our economic growth and prosperity.
- **Improve Rhode Island’s business friendliness** by removing barriers to entrepreneurial opportunities, engaging young people, and expanding access to capital to grow enterprises.
- Continue advocating for the lowering of the corporate tax minimum, assisting over 70,000 businesses across the state.
- Continue removing nuisance fees for small businesses.
- Promote vendor outreach and increase the volume of training sessions that focus on the use of the State eProcurement platform, to attract new business prospects and to ensure participation by **qualified local vendors** on state bidding opportunities, including Master Price Agreements.
- Modify MBE/WBE registration requirements from annually to every three years, reducing the administrative burden on small businesses.
- Continue to **expand SupplyRI** by strengthening connections between anchors and small and minority-owned businesses. The SupplyRI program has seen a significant increase in total aggregated spend in recent years due to strengthening relationships with new and existing anchors and increased collaboration with prime contractors. The program continues to increase opportunities for diverse suppliers, with nearly 450 minority-, women- or veteran-owned businesses registered in the program. In 2024, the program helped increase in-state spending from anchor institutions to more than \$427 million, a 205% increase from the \$140 million in aggregated spend between 2018 and 2023. The substantial growth kept an estimated \$287 million in-state, supporting local businesses and jobs.
- Continue to implement targeted policy reforms – from supporting **lower energy costs** to partnering with cities and towns on **sensible municipal tax reforms** and beyond – that make the cost of doing business in Rhode Island more competitive with peer states and otherwise improve the business climate in conjunction with efforts to support small businesses.
- **Streamline business licensing and permitting processes** at both the state and municipal level by offering digital credentialing. These additional processes will provide efficiency and ease the burden for both business and government. The State will keep paper forms available for those who need and prefer them, while drawing upon this digital integration to create a gateway for a coordinated approach to government support for small businesses.
- Expand access to **small business resources**, including those for nonprofits, and ensure that the suite of resources available is integrated, multilingual-accessible, holistic, and can be navigated seamlessly without duplication of efforts. Rhode Island will continue to reduce potential barriers to technical assistance.





Driving Economic Development and Growth

Economic Growth – Tourism



- Launched a new **tourism marketing campaign, “All That,”** with the intention of driving occupancy throughout Rhode Island and bringing revenue into communities. This campaign includes national ads featuring Rhode Island’s history, dining destinations, and picturesque shorelines.
 - » Won four gold Travel Weekly Magellan awards in 2024 in the categories of Campaign-Advertising/Marketing, Print Advertising, TV Commercial, and Overall-Family Destination, enhancing Rhode Island’s visibility, setting us apart from other destinations, and making the state more appealing to visitors.
 - » Grew Rhode Island visitor volume by 2.2 percent to 28.4 million people in 2023 and increased visitor spending by 4.6 percent from 2022 to \$5.6 billion in 2023, generating \$935 million in state and local tax revenue.
- Invested in the **RI Rebounds Placemaking Initiative**, a \$3-million statewide effort that seeks to support the tourism and hospitality (including events) industries. This initiative has supported programs such as Waterfire Providence’s annual Clear Currents Community Paddling Night, Federal Hill Commerce Association’s Al Fresco on the Hill and Summer Festival, the City of East Providence’s July 14th Intertribal Powwow, and the Rhode Island Troll Trail.
- Invested in the network of beautiful state parks, beaches, campgrounds, and forests by enhancing staffing levels and improving facilities, as well as increasing naturalist programs and emergency preparedness.
- Continued to support the **Rhode Island Main Street Streetscape Improvement Fund**, appropriating an additional \$1 million in FY 2025 with a one-year sunset extension. This program awards

grants on a competitive basis for improvements to our commercial districts, such as signage, lighting, facade, and sidewalk improvements to revitalize main street and downtown business districts and generate activity in these areas.

- » For the first time, allowed grants to be used towards technical assistance to support future physical improvements and streetscape projects in the FY 2024 budget. Eligible applicants are now able to request up to \$50,000 in funds to support project planning, engineering, design, and environmental assessments.
- » Awarded 26 grants totaling over \$5.4 million in 2023 and 2024, including \$1.25 million to the City of Providence to support improvements to Wayland Square, upgrade lighting in Federal Hill, and create downtown wayfinding signage in partnership with the Downtown Parks Network; \$150,000 to support the development of the theatre district in downtown Woonsocket; and \$250,000 to East Providence to support Watchemoket/Warren Ave Commercial Corridor Improvements.
- Launched **Breeze Airways’ Base of Operations** on March 29, 2023. T.F. Green continues to be a base of operations for Breeze Airways, which is expanding under a new agreement to offer a total of 35 underserved or unserved nonstop routes over the next five years. These include seven routes to destinations west of the Mississippi, with up to 12 locally-based aircraft flying 200 flights per week. Notably, at least three of these 35 destinations will be international routes, further enhancing the airport’s global connectivity. Breeze is also expecting to create up to 400 permanent well-paying airport jobs over the coming years.
- Continued to receive **“Best Airport” accolades at Rhode Island T. F. Green International Airport**, which was recently ranked #2 out of more than 500 commercial airports in the United States in the Travel + Leisure “World’s Best





Awards” based on readers’ survey results. The airport has been recognized by national and international reviewers 12 times in the last seven years, including being named one of the “Best Small Airports” in the nation in USA Today’s “Ten Best” Readers’ Choice Awards and most recently the Condé Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards Top Ten Airports in the World.

- » As of October 2024, benefited from a remarkable **129 percent increase in nonstop flights** since 2017. The flights, comprised of 39 nonstop routes served by 9 airlines, include regularly scheduled seasonal nonstop flights from Rhode Island T. F. Green to the West Coast and new nonstop daily flights to San Juan, PR starting in October 2024.
- » Experienced **31 percent more scheduled seats across all airlines** in and out of Rhode Island T. F. Green for the upcoming winter season (October 2024 – March 2025) compared to the previous year. According to Airlines for America, T.F. Green is now the fastest-growing small hub airport in the country, driven by this significant seat growth.
- Awarded a “**Taste of Rhode Island**” food and beverage contract for Rhode Island T. F. Green International Airport through Rhode Island Airport Corporation (RIAC) to provide travelers with more diverse concession options and to serve as an opportunity for local restaurateurs to promote their local eateries, wineries, coffee houses and breweries. New dining options include Saugy’s and Narragansett Brewing Company, as well as other local Rhode Island favorites.

- Created **Litter-Free Rhode Island**, a statewide initiative aimed at reducing litter and preserving the natural beauty of the Ocean State through community engagement, cleanup efforts, and educational outreach. An interactive online “TrashBoard” tracks the progress of cleanups, showcasing the collective impact, with over 400 tons of big-litter items collected between March and October 2024. The Governor’s FY 2025 budget included the resources to sustain the Litter-Free program, including 10 groundskeeper positions and over 100 microgrants to supporting community organizations to conduct litter cleanups.

Economic Growth – Capital Investments

- Appropriated \$45 million in SFRF in the enacted FY 2024 budget to create the new **Rhode Island Life Science Hub (RILSH)**, a quasi-state agency, and support the growth of life sciences in the state, including financing a new wet lab facility (Ocean State Labs) and providing other business supports.
 - » Awarded the first round of RILSH small grants to industry partners and is in the process of awarding grants to other partners and companies.
 - » Aided in the commercialization of technology and business development in the life sciences industry, inclusive of medical devices, biomedical technology, medical therapeutic therapies, biogenetics, biomedical engineering, biopharmaceuticals, and genomics.
 - » Established a 15-member **RILSH Board** to coordinate state life science initiatives and manage a new **RI Life Science Investment Fund** to make investments and provide grants and loans.
- Announced plans for **Ocean State Labs**, the state’s first incubator space for life science startup companies. The lab space, located at 150 Richmond St. that is anticipated to open by the end of 2025, will be home for up to 30 life science startups. The 30,000 square feet of lab space will include several private labs, flex and open lab spaces, a freezer room, space dedicated to microbiology, a microscope, as well as offices and collaboration rooms.
- Included a one-year sunset extension and allocated an additional \$2 million in FY 2024 to the **I-195 Redevelopment District Commission** to





support the development of land made available in downtown Providence because of the relocation of Interstate 195 (“the Innovation District”).

- » Financially supported Wexford Science and Technology’s catalytic development of an approximately 200,000 square-foot commercial building.
 - » Financed infrastructure improvements, including the adjacent property owned by National Grid and the extension of the Riverwalk pathway to support the district in its preparation to manage and operate 195 District Park.
 - » Filled project financing gaps, purchase adjacent property, and cover Development Plan expenses related to its status as a Special Economic Development District, among other projects.
 - » Allowed the Innovation District to close the project financing gap on a 249-unit mixed-use development by allocating \$1.2 million for Emblem 125, enabling the project to provide 12 workforce housing units.
- Redeveloped several parcels since the I-195 Redevelopment District Commission’s inception, including Point225, a commercial building anchored by the Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) and Brown University that includes laboratory space, public workspace, an event facility, and a dine-in restaurant; a 175-room Aloft hotel with a rooftop bar and ground-floor retail; a mixed-use project anchored by a grocery store, 60 mixed-income residential units, and approximately 9,200 SF of retail space; Chestnut Commons, a 92-unit residential building with ground floor retail space; and Emblem 125, a 249-unit residential building with ground-floor retail.
 - Supported construction at 150 Richmond, a 208,000-square foot laboratory building anchored



by a new **Rhode Island State Health Laboratory**, which is anticipated to be complete in the 2025. The State Health Lab will occupy 80,000 square feet of the facility and will feature cutting-edge technology to strengthen public health, enhance preparedness, and support vital functions like lead testing, pollution monitoring, and infectious disease surveillance. It will play a key role in expanding Rhode Island’s bioscience sector.

- Supported the **Rebuild Rhode Island Tax Credit program**, which provides real estate development tax credits for qualified construction. This program is designed to forward fund credits to create a lesser burden on state sources when those credits begin to be redeemed in the future.
 - » Distributed 51 awards valued at an estimated \$198.1 million, inclusive of sales and use tax exemptions, as of August 2024.
- Increased the award cap for the **Rebuild Rhode Island program** by \$15 million in FY 2024 and included a one-year sunset extension in FY 2025.
 - » Supported such projects as the recently reopened historic Studley Building in downtown Providence, creating workforce housing and increased economic vitality in downtown Providence, and the redevelopment of the once-industrial Arctic Mills into rental housing and commercial retail space in West Warwick.
- Created a **Site Readiness program** that partners with municipalities and developers to fund municipal technical assistance and site-specific planning projects. Grants under this program assist municipalities in developing the strategies and plans needed to spur local development and support municipalities and private developers by preparing sites for development or redevelopment.
 - » Awarded \$4.0 million to 64 projects as of June 2024.
- Received a \$500,000 Ocean Tech Hub Consortium Accelerator Grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to continue implementing an **Ocean Tech Hub** focused on advancing ocean technology innovation and solidifying the region as a global leader in the growing ocean economy.
- Supported the manufacturing industry with an annual passthrough grant to the **Polaris Manufacturing Extension Partnership** (Polaris). Polaris, a Providence-based non-profit organization, provides support to manufacturers within the state through training and consultation for sustainable growth, innovative technology strategies, cost-efficient operations, and talent development.

Economic Growth – Supporting the Cannabis Industry

- Legalized adult-use cannabis and established a comprehensive new state agency regulatory framework under the Rhode Island Cannabis Act. Since the enactment of this legislation, seven hybrid retail licenses have been awarded, and extensive public feedback has been received, demonstrating significant progress in the state’s cannabis industry.
- Appointed members to **the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) and Cannabis Advisory Board (CAB)** in Summer 2023, setting a solid foundation

for new regulations and license issuances aimed at bolstering the local cannabis industry. These bodies are dedicated to supporting worker cooperatives, social equity licenses, and the social equity assistance fund, guided by extensive public and industry engagement. The CAB boasts diverse representation, including members from the cannabis testing industry, cultivators, non-profits, and public health and safety sectors. All interested parties are encouraged to attend CCC and CAB meetings to contribute their input and perspectives.



THE ROAD TO RI 2030: DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH GOALS

- Develop and execute a targeted **population growth strategy** to enhance workforce capacity and bolster the state’s economy.
- Pursue federal and private investments to promote and drive business creation, expansion, and retention.
- Support **ocean-based economy and life science innovation campuses** and other initiatives to spur innovation and workforce development in these clusters to increase productivity with a particular emphasis on disadvantaged groups.
- Continue to support the I-195 Redevelopment District Commission in building out the **Innovation District**.
- Become the first in the nation to be designated statewide as an **Economic Development District (EDD)** by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. This designation would allow for the state to be more competitive for federal funding, as well as open opportunity for regional funding within the state.
- Expand **Quonset Business Park infrastructure** while creating jobs and generating economic output.
- Open **Tidewater Landing Stadium**, a state-of-the-art sport stadium and entertainment venue with over 10,000 seats currently under construction in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Upon completion, it will serve as the home of Rhode Island FC, a proud member of the USL Championship.

This World Cup regulation-size field will be encircled by open-air seating, complemented by a selection of luxury suites, a rentable clubhouse, indoor lounges, a sky deck, and more, offering diverse and elevated viewing experiences.

- Continue investments in destination marketing.
- Provide grants to municipalities to continue to make **Main Street** improvements.
- Invest in innovative design and land use approaches, including supporting municipalities in implementing **smart development initiatives**, and transit-oriented development.
- Implement a **streamlined land-use policy** by updating operational structures of active commissions and regulations to prioritize an increase the number of housing units/ homes and stimulating economic development through increased commercial investments.
- Fund upgrades and **placemaking events** for destinations to expand offerings in the shoulder seasons (e.g., development of a visitor center in key tourist cities and towns, festivals centered around coastline assets).
- Work with municipalities’ on-site readiness to prepare sites for development to attract new and growing firms in innovative industries.



RI 2030 PRIORITY: CREATING A HEALTHIER RHODE ISLAND

Healthy residents are an important component of a resilient and productive state. Governor McKee is committed to fostering a **holistic and comprehensive approach to health, human services, and community support** that ensures every resident can thrive. Investments in children and families not only support our state today, but also ensure the health and well-being of Rhode Island's future generations. Meanwhile, we will continue easing the financial burden on our older adults and Veterans by investing in workforce transition programs, increasing support for in-home care, and funding mental health and healthcare services to ensure these populations are supported and can thrive.

Our commitment to health and wellness encompasses physical and behavioral health for all Rhode Islanders. We manage the needs of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, bolster the state hospital system, and provide robust support for individuals facing mental health and substance use disorders. Addressing and preventing homelessness remains a critical focus, as we work to provide stable housing solutions and comprehensive care for those in need. Together, these efforts are designed to create a healthier Rhode Island where every individual has the opportunity to feel good and lead a safe, fulfilling life.

RHODE ISLAND'S PROGRESS

Supporting Physical Health

- Received a \$4.4 million grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's **State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN)** program to implement evidence-based strategies to reduce health disparities related to food access, nutrition security, healthy food procurement, breastfeeding, Farm to Early Care and Education, and access to bike/pedestrian friendly communities. This grant is designed to improve physical activity, nutrition, and wellness initiatives; it was awarded to only 17 states.
- Completed a 2023-2028 **Rhode Island Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Strategic Plan**. This document provides a roadmap for all Rhode Islanders, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion, physical ability, or sexual orientation, to live their most optimal life through culturally appropriate, nourishing, and affordable foods and safe places to recreate.
- Aligned Rhode Island's **regulations for PFAS** with the federal Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) final rule and mitigated PFAS levels in water systems by entering into consent agreements with systems that have exceedances.
- **Reduced youth tobacco use rates** in Rhode Island by enhancing statewide tobacco control policies, expanding community-based education and outreach, and promoting youth engagement in tobacco prevention efforts.
 - » Oversaw a substantial decline in Electronic Nicotine-Delivery Systems (ENDS) products (i.e., vapes) use among high school students from 30.1 percent in 2019 to 16.5 percent in 2023, according to the 2023 RIDOH Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).
 - » Placed several school-based initiatives in 2024 to address youth vaping and help encourage students to quit using tobacco and nicotine products, including e-cigarettes.
- Strengthened the enforcement of the flavored ENDS products ban by transferring licensing and oversight to the Department of Revenue's Division of Taxation and implemented a **tax on ENDS products** comparable to those imposed on other tobacco products as part of the FY 2025 budget.
 - » Secured an additional \$1.9 million in federal funding in 2023 for the **RIDOH Tobacco Control Program**. The funding came from two sources, ASTHO and CDC/OSH, to address menthol and other flavored tobacco/nicotine product use to advance health equity in the state.
- **Increased the cigarette tax** by 25 cents in FY 2025 to discourage smoking and reduce tobacco-related health risks.



- Emerged as a **national leader in screening, early diagnosis, and treatment for lung cancer**, according to a 2024 report by the American Lung Association.
 - » Ranked first in the nation for early diagnosis at 34.7 percent. Nationally, only 27.4 percent of cases are diagnosed at an early stage when the survival rate is much higher.
 - » Ranked first in the nation for lung cancer screening at 28.6 percent. Lung cancer screening with annual low-dose CT scans for those at high risk can reduce the lung cancer death rate by up to 20 percent. Nationally, only 16 percent of those at high risk were screened.
 - » Ranked second in the nation for survival at 35.2 percent. The national rate of people alive five years after a lung cancer diagnosis is 28.4 percent.
 - » Ranked fourth in the nation for surgery at 25.4 percent. Lung cancer can often be treated with surgery if it is diagnosed at an early stage and has not spread. Nationally, 20.7 percent of cases underwent surgery.
- Continued to work closely with community partners to help disseminate information about cancer screening programs and to promote breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening.
 - » Created promotional materials for breast and cervical cancer that are specific to geographic areas with disparate screening outcomes, with plans to work on developing similar materials for colorectal cancer in CY 2025.
- Provided high quality, affordable **reproductive health services**, including contraceptive care, pregnancy testing, and preconception care to over 25,000 Rhode Islanders in CY 2023.
 - » Facilitated training and technical assistance to community-based partners to improve knowledge of, and comfort for, reproductive health counseling and increase awareness of available services.
 - » Ranked in the top five in CY 2024 for best-performing health system for women, per the Commonwealth Fund.
- Continued to support reproductive freedom by signing the **Equality in Abortion Coverage Act** in 2023 to guarantee abortion services are covered by private insurance and Medicaid, removing financial barriers for low-income women. This legislation repealed the ban on using state funds for abortion services for Medicaid recipients and state employees, thereby expanding access to abortion coverage for nearly 90,000 individuals in the state.
- Committed to vetoing any anti-abortion legislation and worked with stakeholders to safeguard and expand access to women's reproductive healthcare throughout the state.
- Developed a **Dental Workforce Strategic Plan** to help ensure a robust and diverse dental workforce in Rhode Island.
- Launched a new statewide **Rhode Island Rental Registry**, requiring all landlords in Rhode Island to submit information about a rental properties' adherence to housing standards and health laws (including Certificates of Lead Conformance) and granting RIDOH the authority to impose civil fines and penalties for noncompliance.





THE ROAD TO RI 2030: PHYSICAL HEALTH GOALS

- Increase physical activity among youth by supporting programs that **encourage kids to be active for at least 60 minutes a day**, fostering healthier lifestyles statewide.
- As a metric of the HEAL Strategic Plan, increase the number of cities and towns that pass **Green and Complete Streets Ordinances** from three in 2023 to six in 2024.
- Leverage the HEAL Plan and other health initiatives to **reduce the obesity rate** in Rhode Island, currently estimated at 30 percent.
- Increase the reach of the **Rhode Island Nicotine Helpline** to achieve the North American Quitline Consortium Quality Benchmark of 6 percent, to support evidence-based quit attempts for all Rhode Islanders.
- Engage at least three new community partners annually to connect with the **Statewide Tobacco Network** workgroups in learning how to implement culturally sensitive educational programming and build local coalitions to educate on tobacco and nicotine health risks, reduce youth initiation, and provide local quit resources.
- Reduce current e-cigarette use in youth from 16.5 percent (2023 YRBS) to 10.1 percent by 2030.
- Increase access to **reproductive healthcare** to decrease unintended pregnancies and ensure healthy births by providing training to implement routine pregnancy intention screening to facilitate reproductive health visits.
- Increase implementation of routine pregnancy intention screening at RIDOH-funded Title X family planning agencies to screen at least 70 percent of all family planning patients served.
- Expand the range of birthing options that center culture, language, race, and individual preferences from 2 current options to at least 3 options.
- Continue to **reduce PFAS levels** in Rhode Island's drinking water supplies and assist water suppliers with remediation plans to quickly reduce and remove PFAS.
- Implement a RIDOH continuous quality improvement project to **increase lead screening rates** among children and update the lead rental registry to prevent and reduce childhood lead poisonings.
- Increase the use of dental services among children by promoting school-based services and promoting oral health integration into maternal and child health primary care sites.
- Increase the number of dental professionals working in Rhode Island through dental externship opportunities between neighboring dental schools and dental clinics.
- Increase cancer screenings, including: (1) colorectal **cancer screening** among all at-risk Rhode Island men and women from 80.8 percent to 85.0 percent by 2030, (2) breast cancer screening among all at-risk Rhode Islanders from 77.9 percent to 85.0 percent by 2030, and (3) cervical cancer screening among all at-risk Rhode Islanders from 79.3 percent to 85.0 percent by 2030.
- Increase current annual Women's Cancer Screening Program utilization to pre-COVID levels, from an estimated 1,500 uninsured women to 2,800 uninsured women by July 1, 2025.



Supporting Behavioral Health and Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

- Opened eight new, fully operational **Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers (CCBHCs)** in October 2024 through a \$76.7 million investment in the FY 2025 enacted budget. CCBHCs are community-based clinics that provide a comprehensive range



- of mental health and substance use services, thereby reducing excessive hospitalization and criminalization of mental illness.
- Enhanced the **Governor’s Overdose Task Force** and its 11 workgroups, which continue to serve as the central location for all overdose prevention and intervention in the state.
 - » Invested over \$80 million (Settlement, Stewardship, and McKinsey accounts), on the overdose crisis to fund efforts across the following core overdose prevention and intervention strategies (pillars): emerging issues, racial equity, data, prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery, and social determinants of health.
 - » In 2023, experienced a 7.3 percent **reduction in fatal overdoses** compared to 2022, marking the first decline in fatal overdoses since 2019. This trend continues, as preliminary data from RIDOH indicates Rhode Island saw a 9 percent decrease in drug overdose fatalities during the first quarter of 2024, compared to the first quarter of 2023.
 - » Became the first state to pass legislation to allow the licensing of an **Overdose Prevention Center**, also known as a harm reduction center, which is set to open to the public in 2025. This center’s primary focus is to provide people who use drugs a place to use safely, connecting them to clinical and peer services. This approach reduces negative consequences of drug use through needle exchange, HIV and HCV testing, wound care, and basic needs, including homelessness services and substance use disorder treatment referrals.
 - » Launched a more comprehensive version of the **Opioid Overdose Integrated Surveillance System** that monitors non-fatal overdoses combining data from emergency medical services and the emergency departments.
 - » Collaborated with Brown University and the National Institute on Drug Abuse to identify prescribing practices that can improve long-term treatment retention when people initiate treatment on buprenorphine (a treatment for opioid use disorder). This includes a 24/7 buprenorphine hotline that allows low-barrier, home inductions.
 - Drafted and began implementation of a **Statewide Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan** across state agencies to reduce suicides.
 - Received a four-year **\$900,000 CDC Comprehensive Suicide Prevention grant** allowing the state to partner with private and public organizations to implement the Statewide Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Strategic Plan, utilize public health data to identify vulnerable populations to reduce the risk of suicide, and increase awareness of existing prevention activities and gaps in Rhode Island.
 - Answered more than 16,500 calls on the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** between September 2024 and its launch in July 2022, significantly increasing connection to mental health resources. This service is also available through text messaging.
 - » Averaged 652 calls per month to the Rhode Island call center as of September 1, 2024. The Rhode Island call center has maintained one of the highest call answer rates (98 percent) and average speed to answer (2 seconds) in the nation.
 - Invested significantly in support for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities including:
 - » Increased the minimum wage for Direct Support Professionals.
 - » Awarded \$10 million in Transition and Transformation grants to community providers to develop strategies to stabilize the workforce and increase access to employment and community activities.
 - » Allocated \$2 million for technology grants to adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities to obtain general technology to assist them with daily activities.
 - » Included developmental disability Medicaid rates in the Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner’s (OHIC) Rate Review process and will continue to review those rates in its biennial process in 2026.
 - » Engaged in a Statewide Workforce Initiative that includes developmental disability stakeholders and other state partners.





THE ROAD TO RI 2030: GOALS FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

- Continue initiatives that **prevent and reduce opioid overdose and fatalities** through public health overdose alerts and reduce fatal overdoses by 30 percent from the 2023 baseline (435) by 2030 (approximately 300).
- Implement new instrumentation at the **State Health Laboratories** that will allow for non-targeted analysis of non-fatal overdose specimens to enable the rapid identification of the emergent novel drugs in Rhode Island.
- Reduce the rate of suicide by 10 percent, from 11.3 to 10.1 deaths per 100,000 Rhode Islanders. This equates to an annual decrease from approximately 120 suicide deaths to 107 suicide deaths.
- Open a safe and quality substance-use-disorder residential program for women with a substance use diagnosis where they can bring their children.
- Continue to fund programs that address Substance Effective Newborns (SEN) and provide wrap-around services to support families.
- Improve systems of care coordination for children with special needs and their families, as evidenced in the National Survey of Children's Health by an increased satisfaction reported by families from 43 percent in 2024 to 50 percent by 2030.
- Expand developmental disability outreach to all Rhode Island communities that are underrepresented and ensure that all adults with disabilities receive services that increase access to employment and the community.
- Continue to support and **transition to CCBHCs** for quality and efficient access to behavioral healthcare services to reduce the need for emergency room visits.





Investing in Children and Families

Early Childhood Care and Education

- Bolstered Rhode Island's **Early Intervention (EI) Program**, which promotes the growth and development of infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities or delays. Children referred to the EI Program receive a comprehensive developmental evaluation to determine if they are eligible. Services are provided in places where children usually play or take part in daily activities.
 - » Significantly reduced the average days from referral to enrollment from 167 days in 2022 to 104 days in 2024.
 - » Significantly reduced the number of children who did not receive a timely eligibility evaluation from approximately 1,100 children in 2022 to 429 children in 2024.
 - » Increased EI system staffing capacity by 38 net positions from the beginning of federal State Fiscal Recovery Funds (SFRF) funding in March 2022 to July 2024.
- **Fully funded the EI rate implementation** in the FY 2025 enacted budget, allotting \$3.8 million to facilitate 100 percent of OHIC recommended EI increases from a 2023 study. Implementation began on October 1, 2024.
- Expanded access to quality early childhood care and education programs, including sustainably **expanding Rhode Island Pre-K** by allocating an additional \$7.1 million in the FY 2025 enacted budget to support 35 new pre-K classrooms – 700 seats for a total of 3,000 seats in FY 2025.
- Expanded the **Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)** to help more families starting in January 2025 by raising the household income limit to 261 percent of the federal poverty level (\$67,390 for a family of three in 2024), the highest level in state history. This policy will enable a two-parent family with one child, where both parents are working full-time and earning \$16 per hour, to qualify for child-care assistance.
- Prioritized the retention and attraction of early educators using several innovative compensation strategies. These include the **Pandemic Retention Bonus Program**, which supported more than 6,800 unique educators with annual bonuses of up to \$3,000 and the Step Up to WAGE\$ pilot with tiered bonuses based on educational attainment for over 130 employees as of September 2024.

- Increased the capacity of early childhood education settings, including helping more than 80 new Family Child Care providers open through the **Family Child Care Start-up Grant program**.
- Boosted the **RI Works program** benefits by 20 percent, offering crucial financial relief to approximately 8,700 low-income families with children under 18 years old.

Behavioral Health System of Care for Children and Youth

- Broke ground on a new **female adolescent residential treatment campus** on state-owned land in Exeter. The 16-bed facility will provide a new Rhode Island-based option to address the behavioral health needs of female youth ages 13 to 18. Construction is scheduled for completion by late Spring 2026.
- Received a competitive **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) System of Care Expansion and Sustainability Grant** for more than \$10.5 million, providing funding to support mobile response and stabilization services for children, community-based intensive care programming, family engagement, data collection and performance evaluation, and key staff positions. Rhode Island's Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) has chosen the Parent Support Network (PSN) as our Family Engagement Organization. PSN employs two Lead Family Coordinators, who play a crucial role in developing and implementing the Children's Behavioral Health System of Care.
- Stabilized 1,064 children and youth served by the **Mobile Response and Stabilization Services (MRSS)** within the first 22 months of the program, as of August 2024. Of the 1,021 children and youth who utilized the services, 89 percent were served in the community, without hospital care or law enforcement engagement, providing strong evidence of the efficacy and need of this service. MRSS has been integrated into the services offered by Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) throughout the state and is available to serve to all Rhode Island children and youth as of October 1, 2024.



- Continued to implement components of the 2023 wide-ranging report on **Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health in Rhode Island** that was delivered to the General Assembly.
 - » Provided comprehensive trainings on Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health for healthcare and social services providers.
 - » Supported the Pediatric Psychiatry Resource Network (PRN) and Moms-PRN telephonic consultation program (connecting primary care providers and OB-GYNs with behavioral health specialists to support their provision of behavioral healthcare).
 - » Supported Bradley Hospital Kids' Link behavioral health triage services and referral service.
- Procured a vendor for the **Community-Based Intensive Care program (CBIC)**. CBIC is an intensive home and community-based service carried out by Community Care Alliance (CCA) and Tides Family Services. The program supports children and youth with the most complex behavioral health difficulties to ensure they can remain safely at home or to transition home from psychiatric hospitalizations or intensive residential programs. Since its official launch in February 2024 through September 2024, CCA has opened 24 cases.
- Successfully submitted the state's **Families First Prevention Services Plan** to invest in evidence-based prevention practices, focusing on increasing family stability and well-being to prevent entry into the foster care system. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is gathering data from Family First Prevention Services Act evidence-based providers for an outcome analysis that will be completed in 2025. DCYF is assessing whether additional cohorts and access pathways should be added to the Prevention Plan. DCYF has continued to train staff on Motivational Interviewing, a critical evidence-based practice that is supported through Family First.



THE ROAD TO RI 2030: **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES GOALS**

- Improve and **expand in-state behavioral healthcare services for children**, including the creation of a nationally accredited adolescent psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF), to reduce out-of-state placements.
- Invest in preventive health and behavioral health initiatives to ensure children are on track for child and adolescent well visits, vaccinations, lead screenings, and behavioral health screenings.
- **Reduce screentime for children and adolescents** given that excessive cellphone and social media use negatively affects behavioral health and contributes to increased anxiety, depression, and reduced interpersonal communication skills.
- Ensure that providers of key children's services, such as Early Intervention and pediatricians, can hire and retain staff and address the need for services by enhancing wages and providing professional development opportunities.
- **Expand Rhode Island's nationally top-ranked Pre-K program** through a mixed delivery system that strengthens the entire "birth through age five" system, inclusive of Head Start, Family Child Care, and center-based care.
- Encourage family-friendly workplace policies that allow families to participate in the workforce while raising their children.
- Increase coordination and alignment between the early learning system and the K-12 school system in each community to ensure all children are on a path to academic success.
- Ensure a continuum of care to meet the needs of children and adolescents.

Strengthening Rhode Island's Healthcare System

- Opened the **Rhode Island State Psychiatric Hospital (RISPH)**. The new hospital operates in a facility that had been part of Eleanor Slater Hospital and treats psychiatric and court-ordered forensic patients who have serious mental illnesses. Operating this separately licensed hospital has better positioned the state to care for these patients and it has better positioned the state to seek federal matches that support patient care.



- Committed to invest in the creation of a new **Long-Term Acute Care Hospital (LTACH)** to serve patients who need acute care and extended services while they await an appropriate discharge option. In 2022, BHDDH recommended a 100-bed long-term acute care facility that serves patients needing hospital level care and those needing extended services.
- Changed Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payments to hospitals to new **State Directed Payments**, which provide additional funding to hospitals by paying a percentage of average commercial rates to reduce the gap between Medicaid hospital rates and commercial rates. This mechanism optimizes federal funding and strengthens our state's health system in ways that better support affordable and accessible services to maximize health outcomes for all Rhode Islanders.
- Ranked **3rd in the nation in 2023 for healthcare access**, according to Forbes Advisor, with the highest number of primary care physicians (25.89 per 10,000 state residents) and highest percentage of need met in primary care provider shortage areas (72.13 percent).
- Completed the **Return to Normal Operations** process with an average passive renewal rate of 59 percent (meaning individuals and families did not need to return paperwork to be renewed on Medicaid) and about a quarter of those leaving Medicaid enrolled with HealthSource RI to continue to get affordable coverage. Of those terminated from Medicaid, 78.4 percent remain covered in some way.
- Joined the national **Nurse Licensure Compact** in 2024, allowing nurses in 42 states who hold a nationally recognized Multi-State License to come to Rhode Island and work. Rhode Island nurses with Multi-State Licenses will also be able to work in any of these other states.
- Approved a **new degree-granting nursing program at Providence College** which will assist in training new nurses who choose to stay and work in Rhode Island.
- Signed legislation that allow certain categories of licensed healthcare professionals to conduct **telehealth services**.
- Proposed updated OHIC regulations to require insurers to (1) **direct 10 percent of their payments to primary care** over the coming years and (2) **reduce prior authorization** volume by 20 percent, an essential measure to alleviate the administrative burdens experienced by patients and providers.
- Continued the **Physician Visa Waiver Program** for Rhode Island, allowing physicians from other countries to stay in the U.S. and practice in an area of high need. This program offers a path to retain primary care providers in Rhode Island and helps ensure that the state's healthcare workforce is representative of its diverse populations. In 2024, RIDOH sponsored 25 physicians.
- Provided up to \$50,000 per student to repay student loans for primary care, behavioral health, and dental health professionals who commit to serving in a federally designated health professional shortage area of high need for two years through the Health Professional Loan Repayment Program. In 2024, the program received a record-setting 142 applications.
- Developed a loan repayment and support navigational tool, continuously identifying and designating professional shortage areas so that those professions can access Rhode Island's various loan repayment programs and initiatives to aid recruitment and retention.
- Signed an Executive Order establishing a **State Health Care System Planning (HCSP) Cabinet** that will take a unified, interdepartmental approach to evaluating and proposing recommendations for Rhode Island's healthcare system. The planning effort will be led by the state and will include and align closely with the private sector, community partners, and healthcare consumers throughout the process.
- Expanded **Medicaid coverage** to all children who are income eligible, regardless of immigration status.
- Expanded **postpartum Medicaid** continuous eligibility from 60-days to 12-months, regardless of immigration status.
- Signed legislation giving Rhode Island health care providers a protective legal shield for helping people seeking **access to transgender and reproductive healthcare services**. This shield prevents civil or criminal action against Rhode Island providers by other states or people.
- Added the **Ticket to Work** eligibility pathway for working disabled individuals under age 65, allowing this population to buy into Medicaid with sliding scale premiums without an income or asset limit.



- **Expanded Medicaid benefits** to include the following services: Community Health Worker, Doula, Prenatal First Connections, and Parents as Teachers.
- Implemented **Healthy Families America** and the **Nurse-Family Partnership**, two free services that provide resources and services to pregnant people and families with young children.
- Added School Psychologists, LMFT-Associates and LMHC-Associates to the qualified providers able to be reimbursed for **covered Clinician's Services**.
- Implemented provider rate increases recommended by the OHIC.

THE ROAD TO RI 2030: STATE HEALTHCARE GOALS

- Empower individuals to navigate the healthcare system, understand medical information, and utilize tools like telehealth and self-monitoring to make informed decisions and take control of their health.
- Work with the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance to move forward with plans to construct a **new LTACH facility**. Complete design process and construction manager at-risk procurement for LTACH project in 2025 and keep pace with an aggressive project delivery timeline of construction completion by mid-2028.
- Implement **data modernization** efforts in the Center for Vital Records to achieve operational efficiencies to enhance electronic connections and the exchange of eligibility and enrollment information to state health and social services, such as Medicaid which will improve claims processing.
- Continue to develop an **electronic medical records (EMR) system** throughout the state hospital system, beginning with Eleanor Slater Hospital and RISP, and begin implementation by mid-2025.
- Advocate for reducing red tape in Certificate of Need (CON) laws to expand access to home care, home nursing care, and hospice services, fostering greater competition and improving patient options. Scaling back CON laws in certain areas has been shown to expand access to low-cost alternatives to care and lower Medicaid costs.
- Direct OHIC to include primary care providers in the next round of rate reviews.
- Complete the ligature abatement and renovation project at the Regan facility.

Preventing Gun Violence and Enhancing Firearm Safety

- Signed into law the Safe Storage of Firearms legislation, requiring that all firearms be stored in a locked container or equipped with a tamper-resistant mechanical lock or other safety device properly engaged to render the firearm inoperable.
- Banned high-capacity gun magazines, prohibiting the possession or sale of any feeding device capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition to be fed continuously into a semi-automatic firearm.
- Raised the legal age to purchase firearms or ammunition in Rhode Island from 18 to 21, with exceptions for police, state marshals or correctional officers, and active-duty military or National Guard members.
- Prohibited the open carry of loaded rifles and shotguns on any public roadway and changed the definitions of “rifle” and “shotgun” to be consistent with federal law.
- Partnered with organizations such as the Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence and Moms Demand Action to address gun safety as a crucial public health issue.

THE ROAD TO RI 2030: PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE GOALS

- Enact a **state-wide ban on assault weapons** to reduce the prevalence of high-capacity firearms, enhance public safety, and decrease incidents of gun violence in Rhode Island.
- Offer a sales tax credit for the purchase of safe storage containers and equipment.





Supporting Veterans and Seniors

Veteran Support

- **Ended state taxation of military service pensions**, applicable to every Veteran who retires from active duty and wants to make Rhode Island their home. Military retiree income feeds the local economy, and these Veterans bring a wealth of knowledge and backgrounds benefiting Rhode Island.
- Dedicated funding for the **Vet Pass Transportation program**. Many injured, ill, and disabled Veterans identify access to reliable transportation, including services to get them to and from VA healthcare appointments, as critical and important to reintegration efforts.
- Added \$350,000 in dedicated grant funding to the Rhode Island Office of Veterans Services (RIVETS) budget, with \$50,000 of that to be used for a build-out of **Operation Stand Down RI's** food pantry and clothing shed storage facility. Another \$100,000 was allocated to Veterans of Foreign Wars of Rhode Island for Veteran Service Officer services. The remainder is for entities to be determined by RIVETS.
- Allocated \$250,000 to digitize the 65,000+ paper DD214 documents (military discharge paperwork) that RIVETS has in multiple filing cabinets. Digitizing these records allows for more efficient, secure, and accessible storage of these important documents needed to verify military services for benefits, retirement, employment, and membership in Veterans' organizations.
- Updated statutory language in 2023 to allow for interment of National Guard and Reserve members at the Rhode Island Veterans Memorial Cemetery. This change brought Rhode Island in compliance with the federal Burial Equity for Guard and Reservists Act, which recognizes the significant contributions of guard members and reservists to keeping us safe at home and abroad.

- Expanded our footprint by providing services to Veterans at the **Westerly and Woonsocket Education Centers** and entered a groundbreaking partnership with the Regional VA benefits office, allowing for their employees to meet confidentially with Veterans and family members at our three (Warwick, Bristol and Exeter) locations, so that Veterans don't have to drive into Providence and struggle with parking on Westminster Street.
- Launched the Veterans' Café Program, spearheaded by RIVETS in partnership with the Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) and Meals on Wheels, which caters to those that are at risk of social isolation and may need increased access to adequate nutrition. The program offers a socialized dining opportunity at a community-based location, a full lunch service, and health and wellness education.
- Hired a **Women Veteran Program Coordinator** to actively increase awareness of the obstacles female Veterans face, as well as expanding access to resources for this underserved population. By 2045, women will represent 22 percent of Rhode Island's Veteran population, making them one of the fastest-growing Veteran cohorts.

Senior Support

- In FY 2025, invested \$10 million to help stabilize Rhode Island's **nursing home industry**, supplementing a \$30 million investment in FY 2023.
- Increased the maximum **pension exemption** from \$20,000 to \$50,000, which will allow personal income tax filers to exempt up to \$50,000 for qualified single filers and \$100,000 for joint filers.
- Invested \$1.4 million in community-based programs and services in FY 2025, enabling older adults to age healthily, happily, and in the manner they choose.
- Signed the **Secure Choice Act**, offering additional retirement savings options and enabling hardworking Rhode Islanders to retire with dignity. Secure Choice will allow over 170,000 Rhode Islanders who do not currently have access to retirement savings options to begin saving for retirement.
- Included a \$3.7 million investment in FY 2023 to increase the **Circuit Breaker Tax Credit** available to qualifying seniors, raising the maximum credit received to \$600 and increasing the income threshold for eligibility to \$35,000. Both the credit amount and income threshold





are adjusted for inflation starting in tax year 2024. This property tax credit program provides relief to eligible seniors and adults with disabilities who own or rent their homes.

- Launched a **Rhode Island Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) 2024-2029 State Plan**, with support from RIDOH, in February 2024. This ambitious plan details 36 strategic recommendations on how to improve the quality of life and accessibility of care for Rhode Islanders with dementia and their caregivers by the end of this decade.
- Launched the **digiAGE program** to bridge the digital divide faced by many older adults.
 - » Taught older adults to effectively use devices like smartphones, tablets and laptops. This program, a partnership with OHA and URI Cyber-Seniors, delivered 451 iPads and 157 hotspots to older adults living in the community.
 - » Provided online learning opportunities to more than 8,700 individuals who took advantage of classes promoting digital literacy, socialization, health and wellness, and new learning experiences from 2022 to 2024.
- Increased support for **Meals on Wheels** of RI by 19 percent in FY 2024, adding \$100,000 in additional state general revenue for meal delivery to Rhode Island seniors. In 2023, Meals on Wheels of RI delivered over 350,000 nutritious meals and served almost 3,000 homebound seniors.
- Allocated \$250,000 in the past two budgets to Rhode Island’s free **Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)**, known as “The Point.” The Point provides valuable information and assistance to persons ages 55 and older to help identify needs, explore resources and services, and help with applying to public and private programs.
- Increased rates for the **OHA At HOME Cost Share program**, which provides both homecare and adult day services.
- Allocated an additional \$250,000 in general revenues in FY 2024 for total general revenue funding of \$770,000 for the **Livable Home Modification Grant program**. The program provides 50 percent reimbursement of the total retrofit costs, up to \$4,500, to support home modifications and accessibility enhancements to allow individuals to remain in community settings.

- Signed legislation in 2023 that protects consumers from gift card scams by requiring retailers to post a notice warning about how con artists impersonating a business or government agency invent phony charges or sweepstakes winnings and demand expedited payments via a gift card.
- Signed legislation that provides all Medicare recipients over 65 years of age applying for a Medicare supplement plan guaranteed issue rights regardless of health or receipt of healthcare by the applicant. Also signed legislation that helps lower drug costs by capping a 30-day supply for prescription epinephrine auto-injectors (EpiPens) at \$35 and not subject to any deductible.

THE ROAD TO RI 2030: SUPPORTING VETERANS AND SENIORS GOALS

- Support our Veterans, military families, and aging population with comprehensive healthcare, in-home services, and other necessary support services to ensure a high quality of life in Rhode Island.
- Continue to work to remove the stigma associated with mental health, ensuring Veterans and military families may readily access supports.
- Continue to assist our aging adults with long-term care options and ensure that all Rhode Island seniors have access to appropriate and timely supports and services.
- Ensure that new affordable housing units provide older adults and adults living with disabilities the opportunity to remain in their homes or communities.



Reducing Homelessness and Promoting Housing Stability

- Allocated a total of \$76 million in SFRF for **homelessness prevention**, housing stability services, and emergency shelter in the FY 2023-2025 enacted budgets.
 - » Invested \$2.2 million in Municipal Homelessness Support, \$35 million in Homelessness Infrastructure, \$31.8 million in Homelessness Assistance, and \$7 million in Warming Centers and Shelters.
- Invested in **housing problem-solving services** aimed at preventing households that are at imminent risk of becoming homeless from entering the shelter system and assisting households who are homeless to ensure a rapid move into stable housing. These services range from helping individuals access benefits to providing one-time financial support for first month's rent, move-in supplies, groceries, or car repairs.
- Developed the first new **Landlord Tenant Handbook** since 2007 in partnership with Rhode Island Legal Services, the Center for Justice, and HousingWorksRI. This written guide to the state's housing laws will be a valuable resource for landlords and tenants alike.
- Distributed over \$45 million through the **Homeowner Assistance Fund** to over 1,850 households, preventing foreclosures and ensuring housing stability for Rhode Island homeowners.
- Distributed over \$277 million in rental assistance through **RentReliefRI** and the **Eviction Prevention Assistance Program**, helping over 34,000 households stay in their homes and avoid eviction.
- Acquired the former **Charlesgate** nursing home property in Providence where over 200 beds will serve Rhode Islanders seeking shelter, with an emphasis on families with children.
- Initiated the development of the **ECHO Village pilot program**, a pallet shelter community aimed at providing safe, emergency shelter for 45 Rhode Islanders experiencing homelessness as they work to transition to permanent housing.

THE ROAD TO RI 2030: REDUCING HOMELESSNESS GOALS

- Partner with non-profits, faith-based organizations, municipalities, and businesses to ensure instances of homelessness are rare, brief, and non-recurring.
- Bolster housing stability through new strategies and partnerships aimed at increasing household incomes and improving financial wellbeing.
- Enhance and improve resources to serve high-need populations such as people with disabilities, substance use disorder, mental illness, and individuals exiting institutional settings as well as chronically homeless individuals.
- Continue investing in and evaluating shelter diversion and homelessness prevention programs to reduce the need for costly emergency shelter solutions.





RI 2030 PRIORITY: ADVANCING INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY

Infrastructure, encompassing **transportation**, **internet access**, and **climate resilience**, is the backbone of a thriving modern economy. Our roads and highways facilitate the movement of goods and people, while our bridges, airports, and ports ensure Rhode Island remains connected to the rest of the nation and the world.

Rhode Island is leveraging federal dollars to advance our comprehensive infrastructure goals, a crucial driver of economic growth and productivity. Public transit not only facilitates daily commuters but also expands access to education, training, and employment opportunities in vital industries. Clean water systems are essential for maintaining public health, while modern sewer systems ensure our urban and rural areas remain sanitary and disease-free. Broadband internet is a cornerstone of economic development, enabling businesses to operate more efficiently, facilitating remote work, and supporting innovation across sectors. It enhances productivity by allowing seamless communication and data transfer with colleagues, educators, healthcare providers, and potential employers.

Simultaneously, prioritizing clean energy and addressing climate change are essential to securing a sustainable future for our communities. By transitioning to renewable energy sources and implementing innovative solutions, we can reduce our environmental impact, enhance energy security, and foster sustainability for generations to come.

RHODE ISLAND'S PROGRESS

Improving Roads and Bridges

- Established the Rhode Island Department of Transportation's (RIDOT) first-ever program dedicated to directly investing in the construction and repair of municipal roads, bridges, and sidewalks across all 39 cities and towns. **RhodeRestore**, formerly known as the Municipal Road Grant Program, has approved over 1,000 projects, encompassing 673 lane miles of roadwork and nearly 25 miles of sidewalk improvements. The initial \$27 million state investment will leverage over \$100 million in municipal matching funds.
- Launched the largest bridge project in Rhode Island history this year: **the I-95 15 Bridge Project**. This initiative will remove 15 bridges from the state's backlog of poor and deteriorating bridges along the critical corridor between Providence and Warwick. The project improves safety and traffic flow for nearly 200,000 vehicles and \$9.7 billion in freight transported daily, supported by a \$251 million federal Bridge Investment Program (BIP) grant secured by RIDOT this year.

- Included \$87 million in state investment in the FY 2024 budget, which will secure nearly \$351 million in U.S. Department of Transportation funds. This funding is directed towards the repair and construction of roads, bridges, and highways across the state. With federal highway funding at a record level due to President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the state is strategically positioning itself to maximize these resources.



- Secured \$220.9 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to rebuild the westbound I-195 Washington Bridge. The Governor’s FY 2025 budget allocated state funds to cover the required match for the bridge reconstruction, ensuring no additional revenue needs to be raised.
- Invested the resources needed to continue to fund the 10-year **State Transportation Improvement Program** (STIP) to bring Rhode Island’s roads and bridges to a state of good repair. To date, the RI Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has completed 202 projects, including the repair and replacement of 243 bridges, totaling \$2.2 billion of total construction. The total value of all projects under **RhodeWorks** is \$3.1 billion.
- Improved Rhode Island’s Bridge Sufficiency Rating from 77 percent in 2016 to 88.3 percent as of August 2024 through the implementation of RhodeWorks.
- Started **the I-95 Resurfacing Project**, one of 66 projects, valued at \$1.9 billion. In addition to paving projects, Rhode Island has accelerated about 100 projects with federal funding. These projects include bridge rehabilitation, resurfacing, traffic safety projects, stormwater, and bike/pedestrian improvements.
- Advanced 12 ranks in the Infrastructure category of CNBC’s ‘Top States for Business’ 2024 report.
- Developed a new transit center to provide more direct service and better connections throughout Rhode Island’s West Bay communities in partnership with the Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) and the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) at its Warwick Campus. The facility is complete and operational and is setting an example for what transit infrastructure can look like across the state as RIPTA continues its efforts to inventory and rehabilitate our stops, shelters, and amenities across the state.
- Unveiled Rhode Island’s first **electric bus fleet** and began preparing to electrify RIPTA’s R-Line, continuing Rhode Island’s momentum and progress toward clean and renewable energy. Now over 20 percent of all trips taken on RIPTA’s system are taken on an electric bus.
- Received more than \$70 million in grants supporting transit facility modernization, fleet electrification, vehicle replacement, statewide safety planning, and preparation for rapid bus network expansion and light rail/bus rapid transit service development. Additionally, more than \$80 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds has been invested by RIPTA in bus purchases, fleet decarbonization, and improvements to passenger and maintenance facilities.
- Entered a public-private partnership to launch the planning and design of a **new central transit hub** in Providence, replacing Kennedy Plaza. This project will establish a state-of-the-art, multimodal transit center that not only improves transportation but also addresses Rhode Island’s housing needs by incorporating a transit-oriented development component.

Investing in Transit Infrastructure

- Opened the **Pawtucket-Central Falls Transit Center**. This transit hub combines commuter rail and bus service, making it more convenient for Rhode Islanders traveling to and from Boston and other destinations in Massachusetts. The facility has already exceeded expectations for the number of travelers utilizing the transit service. With an additional \$5 million appropriation RIPTA, is constructing a passenger facility that will include restrooms, customer service kiosks, indoor waiting, and space for RIPTA personnel including restrooms and break areas.
- Continued implementing Rhode Island’s transit master plan, **Transit Forward RI 2040**, including the addition of new bus routes in Newport and West Bay, development of new mobility hubs in Pawtucket/Central Falls and Warwick and introduction of Rhode Island’s first on-demand transit service, Flex On Demand.





Investing in Port and Water Infrastructure

- Initiated construction on Terminal 5, the rehabilitation of Pier 1, and a dredging project at the **Port of Davisville** to expand berthing capacity and modernize the port's infrastructure. Additionally, the Quonset Development Corporation has commenced activities to support the anticipated growth of offshore wind project cargo and logistics. These efforts are backed by a \$90 million appropriation proposed by the Governor.
- Approved \$73.3 million for upgrading essential infrastructure at the **Port of Galilee**, the hub of Rhode Island's commercial fishing industry. These upgrades were planned under the lens of resiliency, increasing the height of the bulkheads to protect the port from rising sea levels and storm surge.
- Advanced \$132 million in **Clean Water State Revolving Fund** (CWSRF) projects, leveraging an historic investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This includes \$127 million for the Narragansett Bay Commission's capital improvement program and \$2.3 million for the replacement of a road pump station in Woonsocket.
- Advanced \$36.5 million in **Drinking Water State Revolving Fund** (CWSRF) projects, leveraging an historic investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This includes \$26 million for the East Providence Cleaning and Lining Phase V Water System and \$5 million for the Woonsocket Fixed Network AMI System.
- Continued implementing the historic \$142.9 million investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to **remove lead service lines** (LSL) in our state, including a \$26.3 million loan to the Providence Water Supply Board to remove LSLs in the city. This will help us meet the goal laid out in the Lead Poisoning Prevention Act to replace all public and private lead service lines in Rhode Island within a decade.
- Included \$21.9 million from general revenues to provide the 20 percent state match for federal **clean and drinking water programs** through the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank in the Governor's FY 2022 budget.

Expanding Broadband Infrastructure and Digital Equity

- Approved over \$1.5 million in federal **Community Development Block Grant CARES Act funds** for non-profit organizations, public housing authorities, and municipalities for projects that increased internet access for low- and moderate-income residents across the state in 2021. As an example, one of those grants provided over 100 residents of Newport Housing Authority in-home internet access as a standard utility.
- Received \$108.7 million in federal funds from the **National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program** to deploy or upgrade high-speed Internet networks to ensure that everyone has access to reliable, affordable, high-speed Internet service. Once deployment goals are met, including those for Community Anchor Institutions, any remaining funding can be used on high-speed Internet adoption, training, and workforce development efforts, among other eligible uses.
- Obligated \$25 million in Capital Projects Funds toward broadband last-mile infrastructure, which will provide internet to approximately 6,700 unserved and underserved households in Jamestown, Newport, and Westerly.
- Received \$506,100 in November 2022 under the federal Digital Equity Act to fund various activities including the development of a statewide digital equity plan, engagement of local and regional stakeholders on internet access and equity issues, and completion of a digital equity survey and coordination with local government to ensure statewide outreach.
- Received approval of the **Rhode Island Digital Equity Plan** in May 2024, allowing the state to apply for \$4.5 million in funding to begin to implement the plan.
- Received \$450,000 to increase enrollment in the **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)** in the state from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The ACP provides a \$30 monthly subsidy to eligible households to help pay for broadband services. When the ACP stopped enrollment in April 2024, Rhode Island had the highest utilization of the program of any state in New England.



THE ROAD TO RI 2030: ADVANCING INFRASTRUCTURE GOALS

- Construct a brand-new westbound Washington Bridge that will stand as a testament to our commitment to quality infrastructure, ensuring the safety and convenience of generations to come.
- Establish a reliable revenue stream to make RhodeRestore a permanent program, while introducing new options for municipalities to access local matching funds, ensuring sustained improvements to local infrastructure.
- Invest roughly \$500 million over the next five years on paving projects through RIDOT, thanks in large part to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- Continue to advance a transit system that easily connects workers and employers within Rhode Island and to other regional economic hubs like Boston and New York.
- Develop a state-of-the-art transportation system that enhances quality of life, strengthens connections across Rhode Island, integrates the state with the broader region, and drives long-term economic growth over the next decade. The Governor seeks to achieve this goal through continued historic investments in state roads and bridges, alongside a strategic reorientation of state government to equip municipalities with the resources needed to improve their local road and bridge infrastructure.
- Support Rhode Island’s economic development goals by providing reliable, affordable transportation for employees, trainees, and students. Rhode Island’s university and community college system is one of the nation’s best served by public transit, and RIPTA is working closely with Rhode Island Commerce, the Department of Labor and Training, and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner to ensure that transit meets the needs of our state’s workforce.
- Continue implementing significant investments in water, sewer, and stormwater management systems to enhance quality of life and foster healthy, green communities across the state. These efforts will be bolstered by leveraging funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to ensure sustainable infrastructure improvements and long-term environmental resilience.
- Continue to position Rhode Island as a leading maritime and logistics hub in the region, building on historic investments to increase our port’s operational capacity. By expanding the number of berths, facilitating a higher volume of ship arrivals, and maximizing cargo processing capabilities, we strive to enhance efficiency, foster economic growth, and strengthen our strategic role in global trade.
- Provide all Rhode Islanders with access to broadband service of at least 100 Mbps download speeds and 20 Mbps upload speeds, the new minimum speed recognized by the FCC.





Advancing Clean Energy Initiatives to Address Climate Change

Renewable Energy

- Passed a \$53-million **Green Economy Bond** on the November 2024 ballot that will expand public access to recreation, clean up previous industrial contamination, improve the resiliency of our municipalities and historic tourism infrastructure, and shore up Rhode Island’s competitive advantage in offshore wind. The ballot measure was approved by 67.2 percent of voters.
- Became the first state in the country to sign legislation into law committing to a 100 percent renewable energy standard by 2033, where 100 percent of Rhode Island’s electricity will be offset by renewable production (**the Renewable Energy Standard**). The state is on track to meet this goal through expanding solar, wind, and energy efficiency programs.
- Joined forces with Massachusetts and announced the **largest offshore wind selection in New England history** in 2024 for the selection of 2,878 megawatts (MW) of offshore wind—the first coordinated procurement of its kind. Through this procurement, offshore wind will power over 125,000 Rhode Island homes and 1.4 million Massachusetts homes.
- Completed construction and installation of **Revolution Wind’s** first offshore wind turbine, a historic milestone for Rhode Island, the first large-scale offshore wind farm for Connecticut, and the first multi-state offshore wind farm in the nation. A centerpiece of the region’s blue economy, Revolution Wind is directly creating roughly 1,200 jobs across Rhode Island and Connecticut and accelerating the states’ clean energy sectors with significant investments in workforce development, union partnerships, and infrastructure. This project will power over 350,000 households, with Rhode Island receiving 400MW of the 704MW total; this will help us meet our Act on Climate goals.
- Enacted legislation creating the **Clean Heat RI program**, a heat pump program offering financial incentives for the installation of high efficiency heat pumps for households, small to mid-sized businesses, and non-profits.

- Submitted a successful state plan for electric vehicle infrastructure deployment, securing \$3.8 million in federal fiscal year 2023, and \$22.9 million over the next five years under the **Federal Highway Administration’s National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program**. Rhode Island was the first in the nation to complete both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this program.
 - » Held a groundbreaking event on July 17, 2024, to celebrate Rhode Island’s achievement as the first in the nation to complete Phase 1 of the alternative fuel corridor under the NEVI Program. The milestone was marked with a ribbon-cutting event at the Route 117 Park and Ride in Warwick.
 - » Installed a total of four 150 kWh Direct Current Fast Chargers (DCFCs) along I-95—two in Warwick and two at the Ashaway Park and Ride, during Phase 1.
 - » Launched Phase 2 of the program in Fall 2024, focusing on a community-based approach and is available to public, non-profit, and private entities.



- Launched the **Erika Niedowski Memorial Electric Bicycle rebate** and **DRIVEEV rebates** through the Office of Energy Resources (OER) in 2022, supporting the transition to emissions-free transit options.
 - » As of July 31, 2024, awarded 1,731 DRIVEEV rebates for zero-emission vehicles since July 2022, and 1,203 Erika Niedowski E-Bike rebates since its launch in October 2022. As of February 2024, approximately 1200 EV and 1,000 E-Bike rebates have been issued to consumers.
- Launched the **PowerUpRI rebate program** on August 1, 2024, to incentivize Rhode Island residents and landlords to adopt EV charging infrastructure within their residential units statewide. By offering rebates tailored for residential EV charger installations, the program seeks to boost the adoption of clean transportation, reduce transportation emissions, and foster environmental sustainability in alignment with the Act on Climate.
- Opened **Rhode Island's first utility-scale battery storage facility** in the Pascoag Utility District. This battery technology, which allows for the storage of energy and deploys it when it is most needed, is a vital link in Governor McKee's plan to transition Rhode Island to a 100 percent clean electricity grid by 2033.
- Extended the **State Energy Efficiency Programs** and the **Renewable Energy Fund (REF)** through the end of 2028 and required the issuance of a competitive request for proposals to administer the State Energy Efficiency Programs. REF provides grants for renewable energy projects that have potential to produce electricity in a cleaner, more sustainable manner, while stimulating job growth in the green technology and energy sectors. Rhode Island's energy efficiency programs offer homeowners, renters, businesses, and municipalities a variety of opportunities to save energy and reduce utility bills.
- Invested in **CCRI's Global Wind Organization (GWO) Basic Safety Training (BST)**. The training ensures that the building trades union members and other workers are properly equipped with the skills needed for the rapidly developing offshore wind sector within Rhode Island.
 - » Celebrated 208 participants completing the training as of September 2024.
- Launched the **Energy Project Reimbursement Assistance (EPRA) program** in collaboration with the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB). EPRA is a technical assistance program that aids local governments and municipalities in implementing the **Elective Pay provision** of the Biden/Harris Administration's Inflation Reduction Act. Elective Pay allows local governments and municipalities, as well as non-profits, to file a federal tax return and receive cash reimbursement from the IRS for clean energy projects. These credits can cover between six to 70 percent of a clean energy project cost, creating unprecedented opportunity to secure federal dollars for local projects while advancing our climate goals.
- Received \$9.8 million in federal funding to support OER operations and programming, energy security planning, energy efficiency and conservation measures for municipalities, and program design for enhancing the resiliency of Rhode Island's energy grid.
- Updated the state's solar program laws, providing a guide for municipalities about where solar is most effective and sustainable (preferred and previously disturbed sites), versus where solar is detrimental (core forests). The new law provides a statewide definition of core forests, which increases uniformity throughout the state.





Act on Climate

- Updated Rhode Island’s climate-emission reduction goals through **the 2021 Act on Climate**, positioning the state to boldly address climate change and prepare for a global economy that will be shifting to adapt to clean technology. The Act on Climate requires net-zero emissions by 2050, with interim targets for 2030 and 2040.
- Started developing the **2025 Climate Action Strategy** as directed by the Act on Climate. Through a competitive procurement process, we have selected a vendor to help create a strategy that identifies programs, policies, and pathways for Rhode Island to meet the Act on Climate requirements. The Strategy will be updated every 5 years, informed by stakeholder input, and address areas such as environmental injustices, public health inequities, and a fair employment transition as fossil-fuel jobs are replaced by green energy jobs.
 - » Awarded over \$200,000 to community groups in February 2024 for projects aimed at enhancing public engagement around the 2025 Climate Action Strategy.
- Established a dedicated funding stream for the **Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4)** to implement the Act on Climate. The first year of funding provided an initial \$3 million. A multi-agency spending plan was developed to achieve a balanced distribution of funds to agencies between adaptation and resiliency, as

well as a balance between program execution, capacity building, and engagement. Each year thereafter, EC4 can receive up to \$1.5 million in funding. For FY 2025, EC4 has solicited funding requests from agencies and is developing an updated multi-agency spending plan.

- » Allocated \$1.6 million across state agencies through the **EC4’s FY 2025 Spending Plan**, with support from DEM, to support continued implementation of the Act on Climate.

Mitigation of Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Climate Resiliency, and Sustainability

- Renewed the **Lead by Example Executive Order**, directing state agencies and municipal governments to lower their greenhouse gas emissions and reduce energy costs across Rhode Island through investments in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and clean transportation.
 - » Mandated that state agencies work with OER and DEM on initiatives like EV fleet conversion and charging infrastructure, energy efficiency measures, 100 percent renewable energy for state government, and public tracking and reporting.
 - » Implemented resource recovery stations at DEM buildings to maximize recycling, encourage composting, and minimize materials heading to the landfill.





- Received a nearly \$15.5 million **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** award critically supported through DEM and the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) – the largest grant ever received by Rhode Island through the program, with a 10 percent state match from Rhode Island Capital Plan Funds. These funds will be used for an over \$17.2 million project to elevate structures at the Port of Galilee in Narraganset, Wickford Dock, and replace eight docks at Galilee, DEM’s Division of Marine Fisheries’ Jerusalem facility, and DEM’s Division of Law Enforcement’s Wickford Marine Base to improve resilience to the increasing impacts of climate change. These improvements at the Port of Galilee will ensure that it remains a vibrant working waterfront for the commercial fishers who berth there and the many commercial crews up and down the Atlantic Coast.
- Ranked third in the nation in for natural environment in the U.S. News and World Report’s 2024 Best States list, reflecting the high value that the state places on our natural environment and is based on pollution levels measured by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
- Released the 2022 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Inventory, which indicated that Rhode Island’s **GHG emissions decreased by 2.2% in 2022** from 2021 levels, serving as a call to action to continue collaborative work to advance progress toward the next benchmark mandated by the 2021 Act on Climate.
- Received approval from the U.S. Department of Energy for \$31.8 million in funding for **the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate (HEAR) program**. Rhode Island is the first state in New England to launch this program, which will provide rebates for electrification measures in low-and-moderate income households.
- Established a \$20-million **Public School Energy Equity Program** to support underserved Rhode Island schools. This initiative combines a \$5 million federal earmark with \$15 million from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. The program aims to implement energy-saving measures in disadvantaged public schools, enhancing building occupants’ health, safety, and comfort while simultaneously reducing energy costs.
- Adopted **three critical clean vehicle rules**: Advanced Clean Cars II (ACCII), Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT), and Low-NOx Heavy-Duty Omnibus (HDO)—a key step to meeting the greenhouse gas emissions reductions goals set out in the Act on Climate.
 - » Through ACCII, required vehicle manufacturers to deliver for sale all new cars and passenger trucks with an ultimate plan that requires zero-emissions by 2035.
 - » Through ACT, required vehicle manufacturers to sell zero-emission medium-heavy duty vehicles as an increasing percentage of their annual sales through 2035, ranging from 40-75 percent of sales depending on vehicle class.
 - » Through HDO, required drastic cuts on smog-forming nitrogen oxides (NOx) from conventional heavy-duty engines.
- Secured over \$12.4 million from the **Clean School Bus program** administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to purchase 45 new electric school buses and charged equipment infrastructure.
- Secured a \$450-million **Climate Pollution Reduction Coalition Grant** in partnership with Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine from the U.S. EPA to rapidly accelerate the adoption of cold-climate air-source heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and ground source heat pumps in more than 500,000 single-family and multifamily residential buildings across New England.
- Initiated the **Forest Conservation Commission** to work on forest conservation policies across the state to ensure this valuable carbon storage mechanism and habitat are appropriately managed and conserved.
- Announced \$4 million for **2023 Brownfields Bond Fund Grant** that will support the cleanup of contaminated property, transforming underused brownfield sites into locations that add value to communities.
- Invested in **Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA)** programming funding to support self-sustaining agricultural and seafood sectors. The 2024 grantees included more than 40 local farmers, fishers, and specialty food producers. Supporting the production of local food means fewer trucks on the road, which means less air pollution and better health for Rhode Islanders and our environment.



- Reestablished the **Chief Resilience Officer position** via Executive Order 23-07 to be housed within DEM and directed that the position be responsible for coordinating resilience efforts across state and local government.
- Provided \$12 million in Action Grants for participants of the **Municipal Resilience Program (MRP)**. Grant funds will help communities restore and improve vulnerable coastal habitats, river and stream floodplains, and infrastructure. Funding for these action grants comes from the 2022 voter-approved Green Bond, which provided for \$16 million for municipal resilience projects and was part of Governor McKee's FY 2023 budget.
- Launched the **Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program** through OER to distribute over \$2.75 million dollars in state and federal funding to municipalities across Rhode Island for energy efficiency upgrades in their municipal buildings.
- Initiated the development of a **Municipal Microgrids Program** to promote microgrid adoption and enhance municipal resiliency. OER has secured a technical consultant to assist in designing this program, which launched in Fall 2024.
- Engaged with Polaris to secure \$2.9 million from the U.S. Department of Energy to support manufacturing companies in transitioning to energy efficient and waste-mitigating manufacturing processes.

THE ROAD TO RI 2030: GOALS FOR CLEAN ENERGY AND ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

- Make Rhode Island a **national leader in renewable electricity generation** in the next decade by achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.
- Meet the following emission mandates dictated by the Act on Climate: 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2030, 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2040, and net-zero emissions by 2050.
- Continue to implement the Act on Climate and support DEM, OER, and other EC4-related agencies as they continue to make progress on meeting the state's ambitious climate goals.
- Publish a resiliency report on progress and recommendations for preparing Rhode Island for impacts from sea level rise, storm surges, and more frequent intense weather events starting in 2025 and continuing every two years thereafter.
- Continue to invest in preparedness through the Municipal Resiliency Program, protecting infrastructure in coastal and riverine communities from storms and floods due to climate change.
- Harness utility-scale offshore wind, leveraging cross-state market development with strong local economic development impacts to advance the state toward 100 percent renewable energy.
- Identify a **sustainable funding source to incentivize thermal electrification**. This will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, create jobs, and fill a funding gap that would advance the market for decarbonized heating solutions in the state.
- Modernize the electrical grid to support increased use of electricity, renewable energy generation, and battery storage and explore opportunities to invest in advanced metering functionalities.
- Reduce the cost of electricity to encourage transition away from fossil fuels.
- Reduce our consumption of single use plastics.
- Invest in the **Blue Economy** and focus on needed climate-related job skills training in programs such as Real Jobs RI and Pathways RI, including solar roof installation, electricians, and construction, particularly for frontline communities.
- Continue and expand financial incentives for individuals and businesses to install rooftop solar and switch to electric vehicles while working with public-private partnerships to provide the needed charging infrastructure.
- Increase support for additional initiatives to help communities most affected by pollution and lack of access to green spaces throughout the state.





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