



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Adoption Rhode Island Selected to Lead Youth Action Board for Statewide Homelessness Response

PROVIDENCE, RI — Adoption Rhode Island (ARI) has been selected as the backbone agency for the Rhode Island Continuum of Care (RiCoC)'s Youth Action Board (YAB), marking a significant step forward in ensuring that young people with lived experience help shape the state's response to youth homelessness.

A youth- and family-serving organization and recognized leader in developing innovative programming to prevent homelessness and support positive outcomes for young people, ARI will lead the development and facilitation of the Youth Action Board. In this role, ARI will engage young people who have experienced housing instability or homelessness, including those with foster care experience, and support them in building leadership skills, elevating their voices, and applying their lived expertise to shape solutions that directly impact their lives and communities.

Through the YAB, young people will not only share their experiences, but also help inform how programs are designed, how resources are allocated, and how Rhode Island strengthens its overall response to youth homelessness.

This initiative will launch this month and is part of Rhode Island's participation in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), a federal initiative that supports communities in developing coordinated, youth-driven strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness. A core component of YHDP is the meaningful engagement of young people with lived experience, making the Youth Action Board central to this work.

The initiative represents an expansion of ARI's longstanding efforts to pair direct services with advocacy aimed at transforming the systems that shape young people's futures.

According to ARI CEO Darlene Allen:

“ARI is dedicated to empowering youth. Creating and supporting opportunities for young people to use their voices and leadership to drive meaningful change are core values of our organization. We are excited about this opportunity and look forward to partnering with youth and members of the RiCoC on this important work.

We are proud to have been selected for this role and recognize the responsibility it carries. We are committed to standing alongside young people as they grow into the leaders who will help shape Rhode Island's response to the challenges they face.”

Sarah Saint Laurent, Coordinator of the RiCoC, added:

“Selecting Adoption Rhode Island as the backbone agency for the Youth Action Board strengthens the RiCoC's collective ability to address youth homelessness with insight, compassion, and accountability. ARI's proven track record in youth engagement and systems



change will help ensure that the voices of young people guide policies, programs, and investments statewide. We look forward to working alongside ARI as they support young leaders in driving meaningful change across our homelessness response system.”

About Adoption Rhode Island

Adoption Rhode Island (ARI) is a statewide nonprofit organization whose mission is to ensure safety, belonging, and permanency for foster and adopted children, vulnerable youth, and families. ARI pairs direct services with systems-change strategies, elevating youth voices and partnering across public and community systems to improve outcomes.

The organization was recently recognized with the Aging Out 2025 Phoenix Youth Impact Award from the RightWay Foundation for the quality and impact of its programs supporting youth and young adults transitioning from foster care to adulthood, including efforts to prevent youth homelessness.

For more information, visit www.adoptionri.org.

About the Rhode Island Continuum of Care

The Rhode Island Continuum of Care (RICOc) promotes a community-wide commitment to ending homelessness. It coordinates funding and strategy across community-based providers and state and local governments to rapidly rehouse individuals and families while minimizing trauma and disruption.

Rhode Island operates a single, statewide Continuum of Care that guides homelessness programs and policies, administers federal funding, and brings together a broad network of partners working to prevent and end homelessness.

The Youth Action Board (YAB) serves as a standing committee of the RICOc and centers the voices of young people with lived experience. The YAB works with the RICOc Board and state agencies to provide direct input on youth homelessness and to help shape responsive, effective systems.

This work is supported in part by the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), a federal initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that provides funding and technical assistance to help communities build coordinated, youth-centered approaches to ending homelessness.

For more information, visit <https://continuumofcareri.com>.

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