



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**

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**Testimony Re: Governor's Supplemental Request to Amend FY 2022  
Appropriations Act Relating to Housing Affordability and Security  
Senate Finance Committee**

**October 21, 2021**

**Stephanie Geller, Deputy Director**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its strong support of Governor McKee's Supplemental Request to Amend the FY 2022 Appropriations Act, including a \$29.5M initial investment in housing affordability and security using *American Rescue Plan* State Fiscal Recovery Funds. We appreciate the Governor's request to invest 10% of *ARP* funds in affordable housing, child care, small businesses, and expanding broadband, interconnected issues that support our families and our economy.

The Governor's proposal includes \$15M for affordable housing development, \$12M for property acquisition for affordable and supportive housing, \$1.5M for housing stability services, \$500,000 for staffing in the Office of Housing and Community Development, and \$500,000 for broadband mapping and coordination. These resources will make a real difference and be an important first step in meeting the needs of Rhode Island families.

We know that when children live in poor quality, unaffordable, or crowded housing, it has a negative impact on their physical health, development, emotional well-being, and on the family's ability to meet children's basic needs. And when needs are severe, families can lose their homes and become homeless. According to the Rhode Island Coalition to End Homelessness, over the past month, nearly 600 people were sleeping outside, in cars, or in other places not meant for human habitation, including 53 families with children.

We urge you to act now to support this request to provide immediate funds to address the housing and homelessness crisis in Rhode Island and to make long-term investments in housing a priority when deciding how to spend the remaining *ARP* funds. Without a safe place to live, children cannot learn, play, or grow, and their parents cannot get and retain employment or provide a safe home for their families.

Thank you for the leadership that the General Assembly has shown on housing over the past year and for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

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