

OPEN DOORS

Biannual Report 2024-2025



Investing in people, not prisons.

Letter from the Board Chair

The work we are doing together at OpenDoors has never felt more important and I have never been prouder of the support we are providing those we serve. Over the past year, OpenDoors has deepened and expanded our mission. What began as an organization providing transitional housing and reentry support for people returning from incarceration has evolved into one of RI's most vital social service agencies meeting the urgent challenges of housing, recovery, and justice head-on.



In 2024 and 2025, we continued to lead with innovation and compassion. Our She Thrives program has become a national model for recovery and reentry, offering justice-involved women an opportunity to build new lives. She Thrives earned a Department of Justice Second Chance Act Grant, allowing us to expand services and prepare for a randomized controlled trial in 2026 that will measure its long-term impact. At a time when so many systems continue to fail women, especially mothers and survivors of violence, She Thrives demonstrates what's possible when we invest in people, not prisons.

We have also broken new ground in addiction treatment by becoming the first social service agency in the country to offer participants access to GLP-1 medication, a promising new tool in recovery that targets the biological roots of craving and relapse. Paired with supportive housing and case management, this pilot is already showing promising results and has garnered national attention from the pages of "The New York Times" to Congress.

OpenDoors has expanded to address RI's housing and homelessness crisis. Our new Woonsocket shelter added fifty beds to a city in desperate need of safe, dignified space. We have also launched a Master Leasing program, an innovative model that allows tenants with criminal records or histories of homelessness to rent directly from us, thereby removing the barriers that so often keep people locked out of housing.

Through all of this, our staff and partners have been the heart of OpenDoors. From the thousands of meals prepared each month by our kitchen team, to our Fair Chance Job Fairs connecting jobseekers with employers, to our advocacy campaigns that helped restore millions in state homelessness funding, each success is a reminder of what collective action can achieve.

OpenDoors remains a place where people who have been most impacted by incarceration lead the way in creating solutions. We continue to grow, but we never lose sight of our mission: to ensure that every person has a fair chance at housing, employment, recovery, and dignity.

Andy Horwitz, Chairman of the Board

OpenDoors Deputy Director Dina Bruce talks in her office about a new grant she is overseeing to help women who are getting out of prison. JAMES L. COMPTON/ALTA/DE BONO PHOTOGRAPHY

Rebuilding Families with the She Thrives Program

Over the past five years, OpenDoors built and expanded our services for justice-involved women. During that time, we developed Foundations, a transitional house for women, and our Women & Children's house. Over the past two years, our She Thrives program, which provides full, wrap-around support and housing has provided over 130 women the opportunity to build a new life.

Too often, women struggling with addiction and mental health issues are arrested and incarcerated instead of provided with the treatment they need. The majority of women in the Rhode Island prison are themselves victims of violence, and they are also mothers striving to take care of their children. Instead of a punishment only system, the She Thrives program works with the courts and prison system to provide women facing prison time to be diverted into our housing programs.

In 2024, OpenDoors received a Department of Justice 2nd Chance Act Grant to allow us to expand She Thrives and also prove that it works. In 2026, we will be starting a randomized controlled trial to test whether the program reduces recidivism and improves the lives of participants and their children. She Thrives is run by women who have themselves proven what is possible when we invest in people, not prisons, and who are now looking to prove we can do the same for many other women in need.





A Promising New Pathway for Addiction Recovery

In 2025, OpenDoors became the first social service program in the country to provide its participants access to a promising new treatment for addiction recovery—GLP-1 medication. Substance use disorder is one of the most urgent public health crises of our time and one of the most challenging obstacles for women in She Thrives. Unfortunately, options for medical treatment are often overlooked in favor of criminalizing and incarcerating those who are most affected. This traps vulnerable people in the cycle of incarceration instead of connecting them with the support they need. However, recent research shows that GLP-1 medications, drugs that are currently used to treat diabetes and induce weight loss, could also have a big impact for those struggling with substance use. The medication works by targeting the centers of the brain responsible for cravings, which could make it a powerful tool for managing addictions and preventing relapse.

She Thrives pairs this promising medication with other supportive services like sober transitional housing and case management to help our clients overcome substance use disorder. This project is a partnership with Doctor Steve Klein from Caron Treatment Center in Pennsylvania, who is donating his services pro-bono, and the Center for Addiction Science, Policy, and Research.

Around twenty individuals have enrolled in the program so far and almost all have remained on the medication and reported positive results. Many mention a reduction in craving symptoms such as anxiety when around substances, no longer having ‘drug dreams,’ an increase in confidence in their recovery, and a reduction in use of substances such as nicotine, alcohol, and opiates.

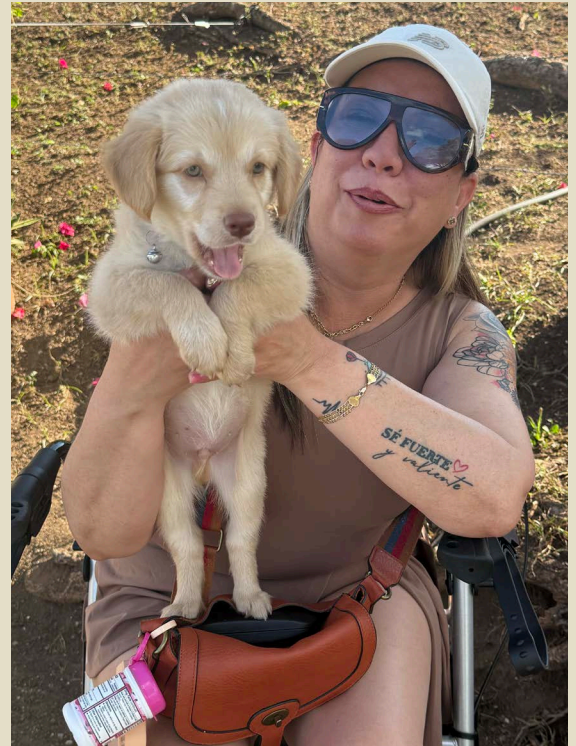


“I have not only lost weight but I’ve gotten stronger in my recovery—I used to have a pit in my stomach when I thought about drugs. I had drug dreams. They are gone.”

- Jessica, a graduate of the Foundations house

A Life-changing Treatment

In 2025, Jessica moved into the OpenDoors shelter in Woonsocket, homeless for the first time in her life. She struggled with depression and chronic pain from a botched surgery. For months hardly anyone at the shelter knew that every day she went to the corner store and drank until she was drunk. Eventually, she told her case manager, who recommended the GLP-1 treatment program.



Jessica's progress after starting the medication seemed like a miracle to her. She stated, "I didn't think it would work. But it immediately did, it gave me back my life." She stopped drinking the day she took her first shot, and five months later she hasn't gone back. Her pain and depression decreased. Her desire for alcohol disappeared. She cut back from one pack of cigarettes a day to a pack a week. Only three months after starting the treatment, she was invited by her daughter to move out of the shelter

to live with her. That winter, she traveled to Puerto Rico with her children. It was a 180 degree turn-around.

The She Thrives GLP-1 Pilot: By the Numbers

20

individuals
enrolled in the pilot

119%

improvement in
wellbeing at 3 months

72%

reduction in
cravings at 8 months

0

voluntary
discontinuations

Data is from the OpenDoors program evaluation, which is available in full on the website.

Serving the Woonsocket Community



Over this last year OpenDoors opened up a new shelter in Woonsocket to help provide much-needed beds for people struggling due to the affordable housing crisis. Located at 181 Cumberland Street, this three story building has been updated and renovated by OpenDoors into a 50 bed, 24-hour shelter. The spacious facility includes common areas, group meeting rooms, case management offices, showers, and laundry facilities to meet all the residents' needs.



The project is a partnership between OpenDoors, the City of Woonsocket, which owns the building, and the state of Rhode Island, which is providing the funding. OpenDoors oversaw extensive upgrades to the fire alarm system that were required to develop the building into a shelter facility and is collaborating with the Woonsocket New Beginnings soup kitchen and other Woonsocket based organizations to help bring support to the Woonsocket community. The hope is that this can become a long-term resource to help Woonsocket residents struggling with losing their housing find the help they need to get back on their feet.



With the homelessness crisis exploding in Woonsocket, OpenDoors has used these beds to help keep people from having to live on the street. Deputy Director Dina Bruce has seen the project help so many already. "We recently helped a family of four, including two elderly parents and their care-taker children. They had been living in a hotel but couldn't afford it anymore. I wish we could help everyone but I'm glad we have the space we have."



Jayne and Keven

Keven and Jayne are two of the many Woonsocket residents who have moved into the new OpenDoors shelter since it opened this year. After forty years of living in Woonsocket, they never imagined they would find themselves without a home. When they and their two adult children became unable to afford their rent in the summer of 2025, they bounced from one motel to another until they learned about the OpenDoors shelter.

"I don't call this my home, it's not my home," says Jayne. "This is our first time in a shelter. I don't want to be here come winter, but we are glad we found this place." Keven feels the same, stating, "I'm grateful because at least I'm not in the street. It's a place to live for now until eventually I get my own apartment."

Keven has kept his spirits up and is always ready with a story, from his days delivering weapon shipments in Vietnam to his work as an extra in 'Bleed for This,' a major motion picture about a Providence boxer.

He says he hopes to find a new place to live with the help of the Veteran's Association, but until then, he's making the most of his stay at the shelter. The property has a small lawn and a grill that Keven used to hold a barbecue for the other residents and staff: "I was greatly appreciative that they let us in, so last weekend I got burgers for a cookout."

Expanding Our Impact

Renovations to the Pawtucket Shelter

When the shelter on 1139 Main in Pawtucket first opened in 2022, it looked very different from today. Initially designed as a drop-in warming and cooling center, the sixteen-bed facility couldn't accommodate the increasing number of clients in need of a place to sleep each night.

Now, two and a half years later, an extensive renovation project has transformed the building into a permanent shelter. With an increase in capacity to one hundred total beds, the shelter now provides a warm place to sleep for roughly 60 women and 40 men in the Pawtucket/Providence area. The renovations also include separate men and women's restrooms, with four bathroom stalls and four showers solely for the clients, each with hand-capped accessible stalls.

For shelter resident Debra Duquette, the renovations to the bathroom stalls have made a world of difference. Duquette first moved into an emergency shelter around three years ago after a disagreement with roommates led her to lose her housing. She remembers the difficulties of sharing a single stall bathroom with other clients, along with the challenges of using a facility ill equipped to handle her physical disability. "The bathrooms are amazing compared to what they used to be," she says. "Now they have, luckily, hand-capped facilities, so I'm able to use the bathroom without too much trouble."

Camila Carrasco, a case manager at the shelter, says that the increase in bed capacity has also had a significant impact on her clients' quality of life. "All the clients have a little more stability because they have a bed where they can lay at," Carrasco says. Many residents work with Carrasco to file applications for permanent housing, a process that can take upwards of a year. Having a guaranteed bed in the shelter enables Carrasco's clients to focus on their search for a job or a new place to live.





“When you have nothing, having a roof over your head, a bed to sleep on, and three meals a day is the world.”
-Debra Duquette, resident of the Pawtucket shelter



The Fair Chance Job Fair

Breaking down barriers to employment

People who have been incarcerated suffer tremendous economic losses and are much less likely to hear back from potential employers, which makes reentry more difficult and perpetuates the “revolving door” of incarceration. However, studies show that employees with criminal records perform the same as or better than those without criminal records. They are also less likely to quit voluntarily than other workers, and tend to have longer tenures. This means that breaking down barriers to employment helps everyone: businesses get a talented workforce, jobseekers get a stable income, and the whole community becomes stronger as a result.



Fair Chance Hiring helps to end the stigma of a criminal record by giving jobseekers a fair chance at the application stage: connecting skilled workers with local employers who will consider their potential before their past. And over the last two years, it's had a big impact on justice-impacted Rhode Islanders: The April 2025 fair brought over 200 jobseekers, 9 local employers, and about a dozen resources and training programs. At the previous fair in October 2024, there were over 250 jobseekers, 11 employers and about a dozen resources and programs. A follow-up survey conducted by Roger Williams University found that the October job fair resulted in 44 new hires!

“In reentry workforce programs, the biggest question I’ve heard from justice-impacted folks is ‘well, who’s going to work with me or hire me with my charges?’ Fair Chance Hiring is the answer to that question. Dozens of Rhode Island businesses have taken on the philosophy of removing biases from the interviewing process and take great care to hire talented folks with criminal backgrounds. The Fair Chance Job Fair is where folks can go to find these employers and know that it’s safe to be themselves without fear. And when people can be their best selves, employers are finding the best talent and the best results.”

– Nick Coutis, FCJF Organizer





OpenDoors Shelters Serve Daily Dinners

For the past several years, OpenDoors has been preparing around 120 meals a day for residents at our homeless shelters as part of our new commercial kitchen. Kitchen manager Lashara Newkirk helped launch the project, providing OpenDoors's residents with delicious, affordable dinners every day. The undertaking is a collaboration with Saint Martin's Church, which has been partnering with OpenDoors in numerous ways over the years. OpenDoors rents kitchen space in Saint Martin's Church and the kitchen staff deliver the meals directly to the shelters. Some of the ingredients are donated by local soup kitchens and our partners at Feast & Fettle. Additional ingredients come from local Providence businesses—including Joe's Meat Market, who noticed that Lashara shopped there often and kindly offered a discount to support her work!

Lashara, who has cooked her whole life, got involved with OpenDoors when she came to the Resource Center for employment assistance. She was hired to cook dinners for the 25 residents of the men's shelter, and began working as a case manager and peer recovery specialist as well. When the Motel 6 shelter opened in 2023, she expanded the kitchen to feed the 120 additional residents.



"This is like the closest thing to a home-cooked meal. It's comfort food, and it encourages them that they'll have a home soon. The guys at the shelter are really grateful."

- Lashara Newkirk, Kitchen Manager

Pay For Success

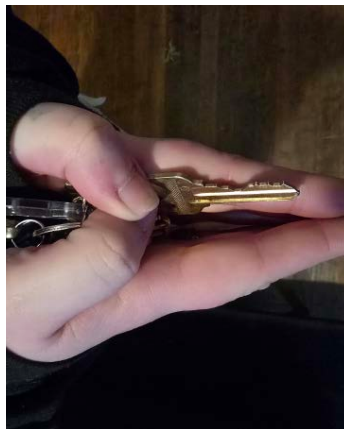
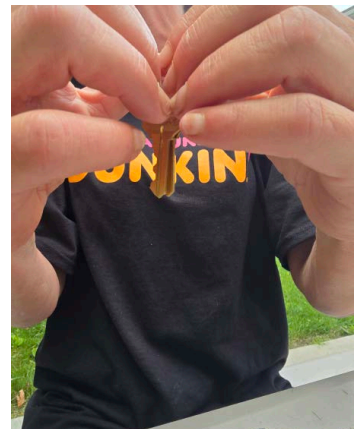
Helping our highest-risk clients come home

Pay For Success is a pilot program designed to support the highest-risk individuals and place them into stable, permanent housing. Since 2023, OpenDoors has enrolled twenty clients who have been identified as high utilizers of prisons, hospitals, and shelters. Our case managers then locate these clients, provide them with comprehensive support to meet their needs, coordinate with landlords to find suitable housing, and pay for the first year of rent while the clients build a stable life.

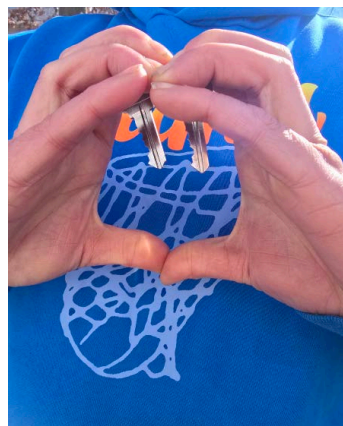
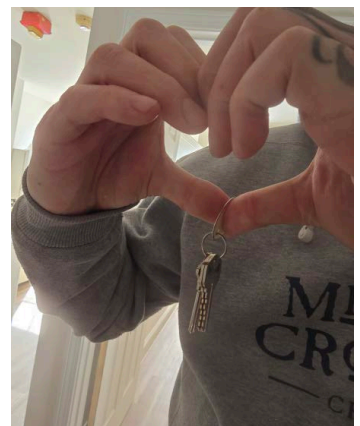
The PFS program uses an innovative funding model: the four-year program was initially funded by private investors, who will be reimbursed by the state if the program is successful. This means the program's funding isn't dependent on governmental budgets and no financial risk falls onto taxpayers.

PFS Case Managers support their clients throughout the entire process of becoming housed again: arranging doctor's appointments, obtaining identification documents, negotiating with landlords, navigating through bureaucracy, and developing the skills to become stable in the long-term.

As of July 2025, OpenDoors has helped seven of our Pay For Success clients move into permanent housing.



"Housing someone who has never had a lease in their own name makes this all worth it."
-Kim French, PFS case manager.



Every time a client gets the keys to their new apartment, Kim takes a photo for her office wall to celebrate their accomplishments.



Client Spotlight: Julissa Gomez

Resident of the Women and Children's House

Julissa and her three kids have been living at the Women and Children's House for about four months, and she says she feels like part of the family: "the staff here are very supportive. They make you feel like you're home." Her kids love playing with the other children in the house, and she wants to stay in contact with the other residents after they go their separate ways.

Julissa worked as a bartender before moving into the Women and Children's House, but she struggled with housing instability and taking care of her children, two of whom have autism. She also wanted to stop drinking, so she needed a change in her career and her life. Now, Julissa is nearing the end of her classes to become a CNA. After graduating, getting a job, and finding an apartment for her family, she wants to stay in school and become a phlebotomist.

"Everything happens for a reason," she says. "I just have to keep moving on in life so my kids will be proud of me and I'll be proud."



Staff Spotlight: Chanelle



This December, Chanelle Newkirk will celebrate three years of working at OpenDoors. After starting as a monitor at the men's shelter, Chanelle jumped at the opportunity to become a Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) at Foundations, the women's transitional house. The Foundations house supports fourteen women, usually between the ages of 20-50, while the women work on their sobriety and transition to more independent living. The program lasts between six months to a year, during which they meet regularly with case managers and receive a broad range of supportive services they need to be successful.

Chanelle is responsible for providing case management, life skills training, Whole Health Action Management, goal setting, and whatever other support the women need. She says she's especially come to love the group sessions that she leads twice weekly: "the group setting is very beneficial, not only for them but for me." It's a safe space with no fear of judgment, and the women in the house can let their guard down. Often, she says, the women who live at Foundations form close friendships and continue to support one another even after moving out of the house.

During her case management sessions, Chanelle works with her clients on building confidence, making progress on personal goals, identifying and healing from past trauma, and developing healthy skills for dealing with stress. "I want them to build confidence within themselves because every room they walk into, they'll have their head held high," she says. "I wholeheartedly feel that everyone has the tools, skills, and knowledge within themselves."

"I think it's an amazing program. I love my job and even when I'm dealing with a lot of the things they're going through, it doesn't overwhelm me to burnout. I'm grateful to have the mental capacity and compassion to be there for them how they see fit."

It's important to Chanelle that the residents lead their sessions at their own pace. "I'm the training wheels to the bicycle," she tells her clients, "if you don't pedal, I'm useless."

Chanelle and her sister Lashara, who also works at OpenDoors with the meals program, grew up working with a community soup kitchen and credit it with their drive to give back to the community. When she isn't at work, Chanelle studies Organizational Leadership and Change to address unmet needs in the community, teaches art classes, and is a trained doula. Currently, she's working on developing a guided journal that would help clients reflect and process their feelings, without it feeling like a task.

Master Leasing

An Innovative Solution to Housing Barriers

Tyrone wanted to start a food truck. But first, he needed a roof over his head. “I was battling a court case for a few years,” he says. “It was my brick wall for finding shelter.” Tyrone was referred to OpenDoors by his confinement counselor, where he met with case manager Lynn Fenner to discuss housing solutions. She flagged him as a candidate for a new program she was tasked with developing: Master Leasing. In February of 2025 Lynn found the perfect property: a white house on a quiet street with a porch, a spacious backyard, and ample parking. The program welcomed its first tenants in March, and now Tyrone is one of six men who call the property their home.



The Master Leasing program applies a model of third-party leasing that tackles the homelessness crisis by increasing the accessibility of affordable housing. The program’s innovative framework is the first of its kind in Rhode Island: OpenDoors rents housing units from property owners and then subleases them to individuals with criminal backgrounds or histories of substance use. By serving as an intermediary between landlords and potential tenants, OpenDoors eliminates many of the barriers that those with histories of addiction, eviction, or criminal justice involvement face in securing affordable housing.

Chief among those barriers is high cost. Landlords typically require tenants to prove an income triple the cost of rent; OpenDoors has lowered that requirement to double. This change makes housing stock more accessible to low-income individuals who otherwise wouldn’t be approved for apartments in the Providence area. The model is equally attractive to homeowners. When OpenDoors rents a property, they assume many of the landlord’s responsibilities—screening potential tenants, managing subtenants, and guaranteeing rent payments to owners.

The program is not intended as a permanent housing solution, but as stepping stone between traditional homeless shelters and stable, long term housing. “Hopefully, this is my final stop on the journey with OpenDoors and Master Leasing,” Tyrone says. “From here, I’d like to find my own housing.”

In 2024, Rhode Island faced a budget crisis for homelessness services as federal funds allotted during Covid expired. In response, OpenDoors helped lead a campaign to increase this funding, including supporting unhoused individuals to testify on the state budget and co-organizing a statehouse rally. These efforts resulted in the passage of the Short Term Rental Tax and the Real Estate Conveyance Tax, which are projected to add \$4.3 million to the state's homelessness fund, and the reinstatement of funding that prevented almost all shelter closures.



Preventing Abuse in RI Prisons

The Stop Torture Campaign has been working to reform the ACI's solitary confinement policies and create greater accountability for correctional officers. This is helping to reduce abusive prison conditions and increase rehabilitative opportunities for people after leaving prison.



Restrictive Confinement Oversight Act

In 2023, seven individuals died while being held in solitary confinement in the ACI, including four from suicide. One was a 27 year old man named Brian Rodenas, whose pleas for help were repeatedly ignored. These tragic deaths sparked public outcry, including litigation to reduce the maximum solitary confinement period in Rhode Island from one year to 30 days. Advocates are working to pass it during the next legislative session.

Willie Washington, Jr. Act: Correctional Officer Body Camera Legislation

This bill is named in memory of a young man who died after experiencing medical neglect while incarcerated in 2024. Although lawyers on the case now know that Washington died from pneumonia, officials at the ACI refused to provide Washington's family with any information about their son's death for over a year. Upon passage, this bill would require that all correctional officers in the ACI wear body cameras to create greater transparency and prevent similar tragedies from happening again. OpenDoors worked with the families of victims to introduce this bill in 2025 and will continue to advocate for its passage.

The Clean Slate Rhode Island Campaign

The Clean Slate Rhode Island Campaign, part of the national Clean Slate Initiative, is working reform Rhode Island's criminal record expungement system. The campaign is advocating to automate the expungement of criminal records and to expand the range of records eligible for expungement. For people who have completed their sentence and remained crime-free, expunging of their criminal records will have a positive impact on employment prospects, housing access, and educational opportunities.



Clean Slate Rhode Island Advocates for Second Chances

The Clean Slate Campaign is working to transform Rhode Island's justice system by automating the expungement of old criminal records. Approximately one in three Rhode Islanders carries a record, including 77,000 people who could have their record expunged almost immediately if the clean slate act were to pass. These qualify for relief under existing law, but the petition process is slow, costly, and confusing, leaving thousands locked out of jobs, housing, and vocational training they should be able to access.

Working in coalition with the national Clean Slate Initiative, DARE, AFL-CIO, RICARES, and other partners, OpenDoors helped draft and launch the Rhode Island Clean Slate Act. The bill directs the Judiciary to run automated eligibility checks and issue bulk expungement orders for all individuals already eligible under law.

The first year saw real momentum, with Senator Andrew Dimitri and Representative Julie Casimiro introducing the bill, excellent press coverage, and the creation of a grassroots campaign of directly impacted Rhode Islanders organizing across the state. Over the next three years, OpenDoors hopes to help bring second chances to tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders that just need a fair chance to build a new life.

We are not the people we were yesterday and you shouldn't have to wait fifty years for a second chance.

Brandon Robinson
OpenDoors, Director of Justice Strategies

2024 and 2025 by the numbers

Total people who received support 3,463 Total meals served 85,000+

People provided with housing or shelter 1,533 People provided with vital documents 226

Employment program participants 611 Clients moved into permanent housing 103



Thank You To Our Supporters

OpenDoors receives significant support from the State of Rhode Island, City of Providence, and the US Department of Justice for our homeless shelters, reentry programming and transitional housing as well as the following donors.

Major Donors

Center for Addiction, Science, Policy
& Research
Champlin Foundation
Clean Slate Initiative
Feast & Fettle
Greenbridge Foundation
United Way of Rhode Island

Mike & Connie Spiedel
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Terrance Lopes
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Nick Coutis
Program Manager



Ryan Bruce
Pawtucket Shelter Manager



Sharon Ashley
Women and Children's House Manager



Ronald Hopkins
Program Coordinator



Brandon Robinson
Director of Justice Strategies



Lashara Newkirk
Kitchen Manager

Financial Report

CONSOLIDATING SCHEDULE OF FINANCIAL POSITION June 30, 2025

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash	\$	915,695
Accounts receivable		15,046
Grants receivable		945,381
Prepaid expenses		37,159
Tenants' security deposits		2,378

Total current assets 1,915,659

Funds in escrow

Real estate, taxes, and insurance	5,038
Operating	52,738
Replacement reserve	50,494

Deposits 10,163

Property and equipment, net 4,893,112

Total noncurrent assets \$ 5,194,587

TOTAL ASSETS \$ 7,110,246

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities \$ 602,844

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	761
Refundable advances	2,200
Deferred revenue	760,427
Accrued interest	130,588
Accrued real estate taxes	64,094
Tenant security deposits	3,964

Total current liabilities \$ 1,727,484

Long term liabilities

Mortgage notes payable 2,204,954

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$ 3,985.32

Net assets

Without donor restrictions	
Board designated	225,000
Other	2,503,492
Total net assets without donor restrictions	2,728,492
With donor restrictions	396,434

Total net assets 3,124,926

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$ 7,110,246



opendoorsri.org