

Transitional Housing Proposal



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- Presented by Bernard Georges & William Bentley (NB4HS) to the Rhode Island General Assembly, House Commission on Housing Affordability

Transitional Housing Proposal



Thank you for the opportunity to discuss a topic affecting Rhode Island immigrants of Haiti and Caribbean nations. 1,100 people are estimated to have arrived in Rhode Island from Haiti between 2022-24.

- Data suggests this population of Rhode Island residents struggles with stressful living arrangements
- Most are in overcrowded or saturated living environments caused by unaffordability of the housing market for this population
- Lack of transportation to service centers, such as NB4HS, is a barrier to their success. It results in missed opportunities for these residents to participate in ESOL/other vital trainings, which impact earning potential—and therefore housing.

This proposal invites the Commission on Affordable Housing to help New Bridges for Haitian Success obtain transitional housing and business offices in a single building.

- By offering multiple single adults short term housing in the same facility as dual language training courses, NB4HS can ensure progress that could impact generations of residents.

Overview: New Bridges for Haitian Success



- NB4HS Founder: Bernard Georges
 - Bernard emigrated from Haiti as a teen in 2000, joining his father in America
 - In 2013, he created NB4HS to support fellow Haitian immigrants navigating their way through a new life in Rhode Island
- Governance: Board of Directors (Voluntary)
- Current staffing positions include:
 - Case Manager
 - Computer Instructor
 - ESOL Instructor
 - Office Manager/bookkeeper
 - Grant Developer/writer (contractual)

Overview: New Bridges for Haitian Success



Prior to discussing the blueprint of this proposal, we'd like to provide the commission with a brief overview of our organization, NB4HS.

- New Bridges for Haitian Success (NB4HS) is a 501(C3) Grassroots Organization Empowering Haitian and Afro-Caribbean Communities in Rhode Island, with a focus on metro-North Providence
- Current business offices located at 685 and 177 North Main Street, Providence, RI
- Service Areas Include:
 - Adult Education
 - Advocacy
 - Immigration
 - Human Services

Overview: New Bridges for Haitian Success



Our Mission

New Bridges for Haitian Success' mission is to empower and serve the Haitian and Afro-Caribbean communities by providing culturally attuned direct programs, legal services, basic needs, and partnerships.



Our Vision

Our vision is to be the voice that strengthens and uplifts the Haitian and Afro-Caribbean community, so all members feel self-sufficient and included.



Our Values

Respect:

for people, communities, and cultures

Service:

Be of benefit to our clients and partners

Empowerment:

Ensuring that our clients and communities voices are heard

Overview: New Bridges for Haitian Success



- **2000+** Rhode Island residents were served by NB4HS in 2025
- NB4HS has achieved funding through the following sources:
 1. RI DLT
 2. RIDE
 3. US HHS ACF ORR ESH
 4. City of Providence CDBG
 5. Private sources
 - Papitto Foundation
 - Champlin Foundation

Overview: New Bridges for Haitian Success



Current Programs:

- Dual Language ESOL and employment skills development integrated program model – computer literacy
 - 30 persons supported to secure employment (90% achieved) in 2025
- Intensive, trauma-informed, bilingual (Haitian-Creole) case management
- Immigration education (workshops), legal referrals, application assistance, bilingual (Haitian-Creole), translation services
- Referrals for health services (primary care, mental and substance abuse counseling - trauma informed)
- Basic Needs (food- culturally appropriate, clothing, housing)

Overview: New Bridges for Haitian Success



Current Programs:

- Community Outreach/ Needs Assessments
- Advocacy
- Partnerships
- NB4HS collaborates with private organizations, municipal, state, and federal governments to advance programs and policies that protect vulnerable communities, including advocacy for Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and humanitarian support for Haitians.
- Internationally, NB4HS contributes to efforts that promote transparent governance, electoral integrity, and institutional rebuilding in Haiti.

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New Initiatives for 2026:

Transitional Housing:

NB4HS has identified Transitional Housing as a strategic program development in 2026. Why?

1. Client feedback, research and analysis on the subject show lack of affordable housing in the metro PVD area as a **barrier to success**
 - Clients are unable to travel to NB4HS to engage in offered services
 - Those services, such as ESOL, help clients achieve better paying wages, which translates into improved housing options.
2. Analysis of the local provider network shows no other local service provider is currently offering this service.

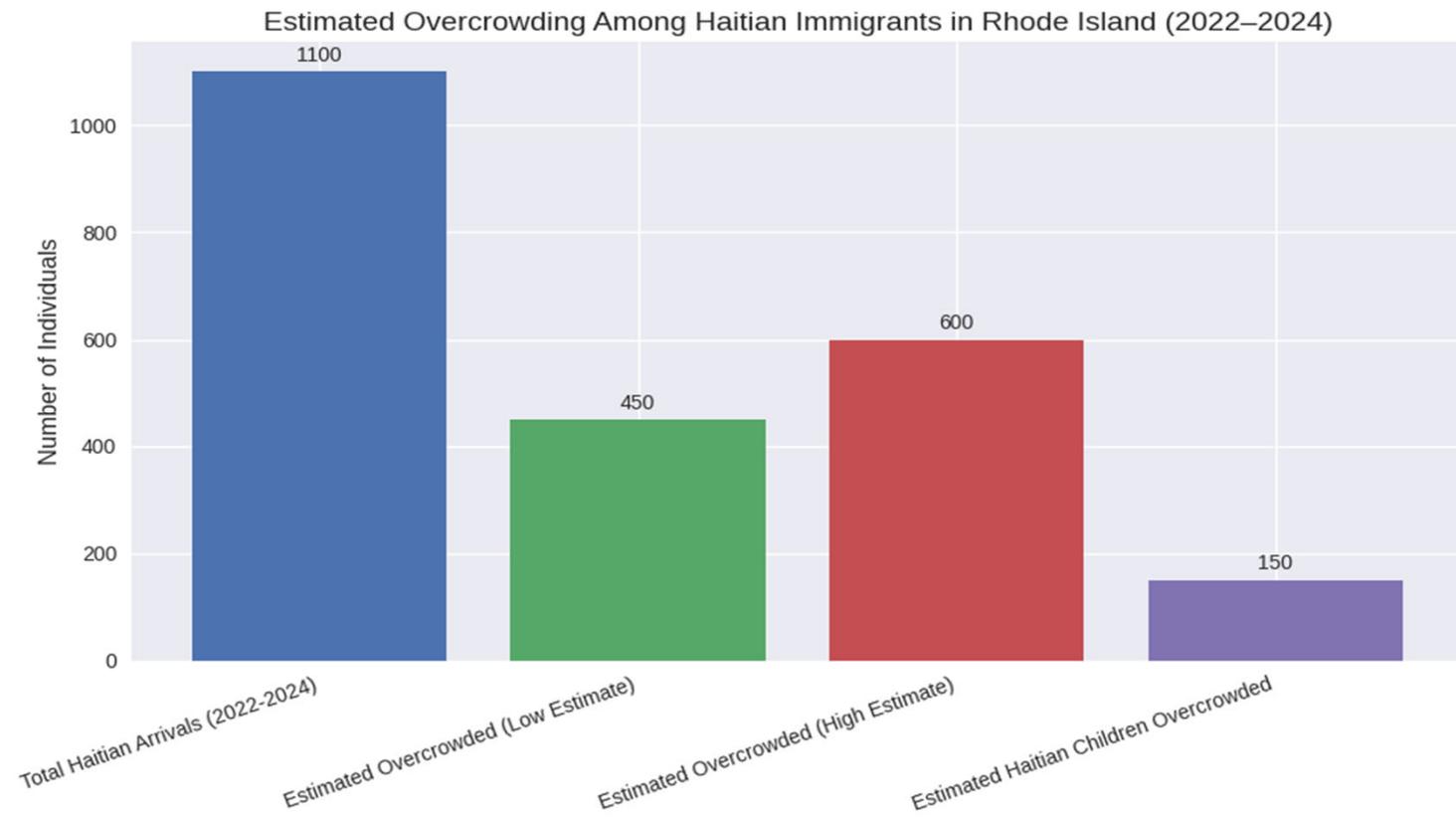
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Rhode Island Haitian Overcrowding Dataset (2024–2026)

- Haitian arrivals to RI (2022–2024): **1,100**
- Estimated Haitian households experiencing overcrowding: **40–55%**
- Estimated Haitians living in overcrowded housing: **450–600**
- Estimated Haitian children in overcrowded housing: **120–180**

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Additional Barriers

Affordability: Clients cannot afford to move out; RI rents are beyond the earnings of most new immigrants

Estimated Wages for Newly Arrived Haitian Single Adults in Rhode Island (2022–2024)

Category	Estimated Hourly Wage	Notes
Typical starting wage	\$15.00-\$16.00/hr	Most common range across sectors
Lower end	\$14.50/hr	Fast food dishwashing temp agency placements
Upper end	\$17.50-\$18.00/hr	Warehousing manufacturing some hotel roles
Rare cases	\$19-\$22/hr	Only if English strong or prior specialized skills

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Cost of Living in Rhode Island & PVD Metro – Single Adult

Category	Rhode Island	Providence Metro Area	Notes
Average Rent (1BR)	\$1,300–\$1,800/mo	\$1,542–\$2,111/mo	Based on 2024–2026 rental datasets
Total Monthly Cost (Single Adult)	\$3,000–\$3,500	\$3,200–\$3,900	Includes food, transport, utilities
Required Hourly Wage	\$19–\$23/hr	\$22–\$25/hr	Based on 2080 hrs/year full-time
Rent + Utilities	\$1,600–\$1,900/mo	\$1,936/mo	Living Cost 2025 data

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Additional Barriers

- Many persons, particularly, TPS immigration status; work authorizations were significantly delayed (forcing the use of any savings for basic needs)
- Limited Creole-speaking housing

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Analysis of local provider network: is anyone offering services presently?

Transitional Housing Exists Mainly Through Nonprofits, Not State-Run Programs

Rhode Island's transitional housing landscape is dominated by programs targeting the homeless, which is not the category of RI residents served by NB4HS.

- Crossroads RI
- Amos House
- House of Hope
- Sojourner House (DV survivors)
- Foster Forward (youth aging out of care)
- Community Care Alliance
- Smaller faith-based programs

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The State's Housing Strategy Prioritizes Permanent Housing Over Transitional Models

Since the mid-2010s, Rhode Island has aligned with federal HUD policy that emphasizes:

- Rapid Rehousing
- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Housing First

This means transitional housing is often viewed as:

“useful for specific populations” but not the primary investment area.

As a result, transitional housing programs tend to be:

- small,
- population-specific,
- grant-dependent,
- and operated by nonprofits rather than the state.

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Transitional housing has never been a major budget line item compared to emergency shelter or permanent supportive housing.

Across state plans, legislative reports, and municipal housing strategies, transitional housing is consistently described as:

- *“A critical component of the homelessness response system”*
- *“Necessary for individuals with complex barriers”*
- *“Under-resourced relative to need”*

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Recent events in the state that indicate a necessary change in this approach include:

- the recent Haitian migration wave*
- Haitian arrivals to RI (2022–2024): **1,100**
- Estimated Haitian households experiencing overcrowding: **40–55%**
- Estimated Haitians living in overcrowded housing: **450–600**

- Shelter crisis,
- Shortage of affordable units,
- Overflow of sponsor households

*Rhode Island Haitian Overcrowding Dataset (2024–2026)

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Policymakers need to acknowledge:

- The need for culturally specific transitional housing,
- The inadequacy of the current system,
- The pressure on immigrant communities,
- The lack of pathways for newcomers to stabilize

This recognition needs to be translated into a coordinated statewide transitional housing strategy.

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Review the Literature: What's working? Where? Is the strategy evidence-based? Cost and capacity needs.

Key National Models

Casa Marianella (Austin, TX) –

❖ Transitional housing + immigration legal services + workforce pathways

International Institute of St. Louis –

❖ Housing navigation + intensive case management + employer pipelines

International Rescue Committee (IRC) –

❖ Rapid rehousing + economic empowerment + ESOL-embedded job training

La Casa Norte (Chicago) –

❖ Transitional housing for immigrant youth + employment readiness

Catholic Charities (NY, Houston, Miami, LA) –

❖ Housing stabilization + job training + legal services

Homeboy Industries (Los Angeles) –

❖ Transitional employment + trauma-informed case management

Refugee Women's Alliance (Seattle) –

❖ Transitional housing for immigrant women + childcare + workforce development

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Analysis of findings: Best fit; demonstrated effectiveness with target population (immigrants); cost effective; capacity (do we have it, can we build it)?

Shared Best Practices Across All Models

- High-touch, culturally specific case management
- Housing + workforce integration (not siloed services)
- ESOL embedded directly into job training
- Legal navigation (immigration, benefits, documentation)
- Multi-generational support (childcare, family reunification)
- Employer partnerships with guaranteed interviews or pipelines
- Trauma-informed, wraparound services
- Savings plans + financial coaching to support long-term stability
- Clear exit pathways into permanent housing

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Capacity (do we have it, or if not, can we build it?)

NB4HS – What we **DO NOT** have:

- Transitional Housing (building)
- Business integrated work model with internships and employment opportunities in living wage sectors (\$25+ an hour wage)

NB4HS - What we **DO** have:

- Case Management
- Dual language workforce development and training programs; future planning includes entry-level cybersecurity (September 2026)
- Operating funds to support building costs (current budget \$40,000 leasing costs)
- Other support funds (basic needs, immigration and legal services)

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Acquisition

- This property will need to be a multi-story, mixed-use building designed to support NB4HS's mission of housing stability, workforce development, and community empowerment.
- The top floor would ideally contain three residential living units dedicated to transitional housing for individuals participating in NB4HS programs. Each unit provides a safe, stable, and culturally responsive environment that supports residents as they work toward permanent housing and employment.
- The ground-floor commercial space houses NB4HS's nonprofit operations, including a job training and adult education center. This space features a 20-station computer lab for digital literacy/cyber security training, ESOL instruction, workforce readiness, and online credentialing.
- The program area would also include five private offices used for case management, employment counseling, benefits navigation, and administrative functions. Together, the building creates a fully integrated service hub where residents can access housing, education, workforce training, and wraparound support in one location.

Estimated cost: \$850,000 (without retrofitting)

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Building Capacity - NB4HS Transitional Housing Annual Operating Cost Estimate

Category	Annual Cost	Notes
Staffing – House Manager	\$56,250	Salary + fringe
Staffing – Case Manager	\$62,500	Salary + fringe
Staffing – Employment Specialist	\$60,000	Salary + fringe
Total Staffing	\$178,750	---
Total Building Operations	\$70,200	---
Total Program Costs	\$23,800	---
Subtotal (Direct Costs)	\$272,750	Staffing + building + program
Indirect Cost (15%)	\$40,912	15% of direct costs
Total Operating Cost	\$313,662	---
Resident Rent Contributions	-\$21,600	12 residents × \$150/mo
Net Operating Cost	\$292,062	Final annual cost
NB4HS Current Available Operating Resources	216,500	Resources currently funded from other sources
Operating gain/deficit	(75,562)	Total balance

Contact Information



Bernard Georges, Executive Director

Email: Bgeorges@nb4hs.org

Bernardgeorges509@gmail.com

Web Address: www.nb4hs.org

Phone:

- (o) 401- 408 – 2114
- (c) 401- 999-5541

William Bentley, Resource Development Specialist

Email: Wbentley@nb4hs.org

williambentley02806@gmail.com

Phone: 401-480-8913