



Rhode Island Department of Human Services

Title XX/Social Services Block Grant (SSBG)

Intended Use Plan

State of Rhode Island

Federal Fiscal Year 2027

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Introduction

Title XX of the Social Security Act provides states with federal funds for social services. In 1981, Congress amended Title XX, creating the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG), thereby giving states considerable flexibility in the use of the federal dollars. Under the Act, states are required to make an annual report to the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), on the intended use of Title XX funds. The Pre-Expenditure Report must satisfy the statutory requirements of the Act by relating:

- a. The intended use of Title XX funds;
- b. Information on the types of activities to be supported; and
- c. Information on the categories or characteristics of persons to be served.

The Pre-Expenditure Report fulfills the statutory requirements of Title XX of the Social Security Act and regulatory requirements at 45 CFR Section 96.10 (1981).

Services will be offered to help clients reach one or more of the five federal goals which have been identified by Congress for Title XX and which are described within this plan.

SECTION 1: State/Federal Fiscal Year

This Intended Use Plan covers the Federal Fiscal Year 2027 with a start date of October 1, 2026, and ending on September 30, 2027.

SECTION 2: Administrative Operations

1. State Administrative Agency

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) has been designated by the Governor as the agency responsible for the planning and administration of the Social Services Block Grant.

2. Location of the Agency

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services, 25 Howard Avenue, Cranston, RI 02920.

3. Mission and Goals of the Agency

a. Mission

The Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) is charged by state law “to provide public assistance to residents of the state who are in need and who meet the eligibility requirements of the various programs, which constitute public assistance.”

As an agency committed to access and achievement, the vision for the RI DHS is that all Rhode Islanders have the opportunity to thrive at home, work and in the community. DHS’s programs and services are all designed to help families become strong, productive, healthy, and independent; to help adults achieve their maximum potential; to ensure that children are safe, healthy, read to learn, and able to reach their maximum potential; to honor, employ, and care for our state’s veterans; and to assist elderly and persons with disabilities to enhance their quality of life, and to sustain their independence.

More specifically, DHS strives to guarantee:

- Families are strong, productive, healthy, and independent.
- Adults are healthy and reach their maximum potential.
- Children are safe, healthy, ready to learn and reach their full potential.
- Child Care providers deliver high quality education services.
- Older Adults and Seniors and individuals with disabilities receive all necessary services to enhance their quality of life.
- Veterans are cared for and honored.

DHS believes in continuous improvement. We have guiding principles and a strategic plan with strategies to help us operate as efficiently as possible and always support the whole family.

The programs which DHS administers are:

1. RIWorks (TANF)
2. Child Care Assistance Program

3. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP)
4. Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (SEBT)
5. Long-Term Support Services
6. General Public Assistance
7. State Supplemental Payment
8. Low-Income Home Energy Assistance
9. Low-Income Household Water Assistance
10. Weatherization Assistance Program
11. Eligibility for Medicaid
12. Administration of Specialized Federal Grants: Community Service Block Grant, Social Services Block Grant, Family Violence Prevention Services Grant; Refugee Resettlement Grants, Emergency Food Assistance Program grants, state Domestic Violence grants.

Additionally, the department administers programs and services for specific populations and needs through its:

- Office of Healthy Aging
- Office of Veterans Affairs
- Office of Child Support Services
- Office of Rehabilitation Services

The Department of Human Services administers a broad range of financial aid, medical assistance and social services programs under several funding sources. The Director is appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate (Title 40 of the General Laws of Rhode Island). The Director provides leadership in planning and directing all activities and functions of the department; serves as liaison with all other state agencies and federal agencies; coordinates department activities in respect to state and federal legislation; and responds to inquiries and requests regarding departmental activities from individuals and organizations outside of the department. The Director is assisted by a Deputy Director in the discharge of her responsibility, and by Associate Directors and Administrators who head the divisions and programs within the Department. They are responsible for establishing priorities, program standards and policies, ensuring provision for training of staff within their programs and providing general assistance to staff in program areas under their supervision. Within the divisions, specific programs are headed by an Administrator (or equivalent title) that has day to day responsibility for program operation.

The Administrator of Community Programs has overall responsibility for the administration of the Social Service Block Grant.

b. Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the Rhode Island Department of Human Service are extensive given the range of programs and services for which the department is responsible. Through its Strategic Plan, which is aligned to the 4 Guiding Principles of Communication, People, Process,

and Technology, DHS strives to promote a culture of continuous improvement and quality, which will result in efficient and equitable service delivery. Below are the primary objectives of the Department from the current Strategic Plan. These strategic objectives have, in turn, Goals and Key Performance Indicators that will lead the Department to the desired outcomes:

Strategic Objectives

Objective 1: Improve communication effectiveness across the organization.

Objective 2: Showcase the effectiveness of DHS programs and services to stakeholders.

Objective 3: Ensure every customer interaction is a high-quality experience.

Objective 4: Enhance workplace environment.

Objective 5: Enhance operational effectiveness and employee engagement.

Objective 6: Continuous improvement of DHS technological tools for staff and customers.

4. Financial Operations Systems

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) funds are appropriated by the Rhode Island General Assembly to the Department of Human Services as a component of the total budget of the Department for the range of services it provides. When expenditures are made for social service activities, federal and state resources are distributed concurrently. Federal funds received by the state are deposited in the General Fund. The estimate of the amount of federal reimbursement is considered one of the revenue sources when the State Budget is developed and is considered by the Legislature when appropriations are made.

RI DHS uses the Direct Allocation method to assign contract and vendor costs. Sub-recipients submit monthly invoices with documentation for all expenditures. The invoices and documentation are reviewed and approved by a program manager and a financial management staff person. Budgets and expenditures are tracked in the state accounting system and in separate records kept by RIDHS Financial Management.

For salary and fringe benefits of program staff, RI DHS uses the time study methodology of cost allocation. The purpose of the time studies is to determine the amount of time that specific groups of employees spend in administering to the different benefit programs functioning within the Department of Human Services so that the costs may be properly allocated among the appropriate agencies.

The Office of the Auditor General (OAG) is the State of Rhode Island's legislative audit agency. They conduct financial and performance audits to provide independent and reliable information to the General Assembly on a variety of topics including the State's financial condition, its use of federal funds in compliance with federal law and regulations, and whether programs are operating efficiently and effectively. The Office of the Auditor General has not yet completed its single audit report for the year ending June 30, 2025. The single audit report for the year ending June 30, 2024 is complete. The auditor performed a statewide audit of the financial statements and a single audit of federal grants. The full audit report is available at:

https://www.oag.ri.gov/reports/SA_RI_2024.pdf or upon request from the RI Department of Human Services.

SECTION 3: Program Planning

1. Planning for Distribution and Use of Funds

In allocating funds to various programs, DHS considers funds available through SSBG and other state and federal sources. These funds are allocated as allowable under federal regulations to reflect the most pressing needs of Rhode Islanders.

Allocation of SSBG funds to State entities is guided by aligning unmet needs in the missions of the various state departments with the overall goals of the Social Services Block Grant program and the categories of allowable services. In addition to supporting unmet needs, allocating SSBG funds to state departments results in greater impact by leveraging SSBG funds with other sources of funding to benefit particular populations or program goals.

For example, SSBG funds are allocated to the Office of Housing and Community Development within the Rhode Island Executive Office of Commerce in order to be pooled with federal Emergency Services Grant funds directed to principal municipalities and the State of Rhode Island, and state funds budgeted to the RI Housing Resources Commission. These funds create a Consolidated Homeless Fund which allows the state to streamline a competitive procurement process through which service agencies can submit comprehensive proposals. Funding streams are tracked separately so that the specific goals and restrictions of each grant can be respected, and accurate reporting obtained.

Once allocations for State entities are decided, the balance of the SSBG funding is earmarked for private organizations. The Director of the RI Department of Human Services, in consultation with the SSBG Administrator, seeks the advice of the Associate Directors of the various units and divisions within the Department to determine the best use of SSBG funds to support the goals of the program and the Department. Two principal criteria are used in planning the use and distribution of SSBG funds: assessing what needs of low-income Rhode Islanders surface as prominent in the daily work of the department, and how the funds can best advance the mission and goals of the department in conjunction with the goals of the Social Services Block Grant program.

Agencies that enter into a contract with the Department of Human Services (or have subcontracts under Title XX) may not charge a fee for Title XX services, except in connection with an approved co-payment system. An agency may charge for other services not funded by DHS.

All providers agree to meet the requirements of all applicable State and Federal law including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1965 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as well as the longstanding policies of nondiscrimination in all DHS programs and the Drug Free Workplace Regulations. All providers agree to comply with the requirements of the Governor's Executive Order No. 05-01 and the Federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988.

All providers report to DHS and submit fiscal and program reports to fulfill the requirements of the SSBG program.

2. Characteristics of Individuals to be Served

Services are available in every community in the State of Rhode Island. All persons in the State may apply for social services. There are no requirements related to duration of residence.

a) Definitions

- **Child:** “Child” is defined as a person under the age of eighteen (18)
- **Adult:** “Adult” is defined as a person eighteen (18) years of age and older
- **Family:** “Family” is defined as two or more people who are related by blood, marriage, guardianship, adoption, foster care, or kinship caretaking.

b) Eligibility Criteria

Although an individual or family may be eligible for most Block Grant Social Services, this does not mean that entitlement for a specific service exists. Additional eligibility requirements may be prescribed by the governing contracts and/or DHS Policy Manual. Provision of services depends not only upon the need of the individual or family, but also upon the availability of funding and the capacity of the provider agency. Waiting lists may be established when a provider is at the limit of its capacity to respond.

The State provides a system and procedure for fair hearings under which applicants or recipients may appeal denial, reduction or termination of services or failure to act upon a request for service within a reasonable time.

c) Income Guidelines

Income Guidelines for participation in the programs vary depending on the service category and are noted in the Pre-Expenditure Report. Most categories have income eligibility at 200% FPL.

SECTION 4: Program Operations

Services are provided within the RI Department of Human Services (DHS) and through Service Agreements and Contracts negotiated with other State entities and a number of community agencies and organizations for the provision of specific services. Services are aligned to the following SSBG goals:

1. Achieve or maintain economic self-support to prevent, reduce or eliminate dependency.
2. Achieve or maintain self-sufficiency including reduction or prevention of dependency.
3. Preventing or remedying abuse or exploitation of children and adults unable to protect their own interests or preserving rehabilitating or reuniting families.
4. Preventing or reducing inappropriate institutional care by providing for community-based care, home-based care or other forms of less intensive care.
5. Securing referral or admission for institutional care when other forms of care are not appropriate or providing services to individuals in institutions.

Additionally, the RI DHS and contracted entities strive to align services, where possible, to the stated goals and initiatives of the Health and Human Services Department, Administration for Children and Families, which for FY27 include:

- A Home for Every Child
- Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Prevention
- The Great American Recovery

The administration of the Social Services Block Grant occurs through the partnership of multiple state agencies, including:

Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS)

Services provided directly by the Department of Human Services consist primarily of casework counseling and case management and include the cost of planning and administration of all SSBG activities and some staff training. They also include the referral to and authorization of contracted services.

The Department's social workers play a key role in the area of Information and Referral Services linking people with appropriate community resources. Crisis intervention and follow-up activities are included in this component.

Specialized services are provided to individuals with physical or mental disabilities including individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

The Department's Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) oversees Case Management and

Protective Services for Elderly. The goal of Adult Protective Services (APS) case management is to engage with Rhode Islanders age 60+ who live in community and have been identified as adults who may be self-neglecting, in need of early intervention, or who have been identified as an APS abuse investigator as needing case management.

Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS)

Transportation services are provided to elderly and disabled populations for non-emergency purposes: doctors' appointments, therapy, medical tests, adult day care, and congregate meal sites for lunches.

Department of Housing

The Department of Housing leverages funding to provide for the establishment and operation of shelters and supportive services for the homeless.

Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals (DBHDDH)

This department provides access to services and supports for Rhode Islanders with developmental disabilities, mental health and substance abuse issues, and chronic long term medical and psychiatric conditions. Funding is used for Integrated Health Home, Health Home and Assertive Community Services to individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues to avoid acute or institutional care. BHDDH's is committed to investing in proven services that promote recovery and stability for Rhode Islanders with Serious Mental Illness (SMI).

The following table depicts the various service categories and SSBG goals that will be reflected in the activities funded by the Social Services Block Grant. Each service category includes a brief description of the services to be provided, eligibility considerations, method of delivery, geographic area served, and partnering State Agency (if applicable).

Service Category	SSBG Goal	Description of Services	Eligibility Considerations	Method of Delivery	Geographic Area	Partnering State Agency
Case Management	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	- Case Management services to adult and youth victims of family violence, domestic violence, dating violence, victims of violent crimes and their dependents. - Case Management, Housing, and Information and Referral services for clients coming into the RIDHS field offices. - Case Management services for the homeless. - Case Management services to individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues to avoid acute or institutional care. - Case Management Services to individuals recently arrived in Rhode Island to apply for benefits and services.	Adults, families, and children at or below 200% of federal poverty level except for victims of family violence, domestic violence, dating violence, victims of violent crimes and their dependents (no income limits)	Public & Private	Statewide	- DHS - RI DBHDDH - RI Dept of Housing
Congregate Meals	2,3,4	Congregate meal site for homeless populations.	Adults, families, and children at or below 200% of federal poverty level	Private	Urban Core	
Counseling	3,4,5	Counseling for homeless population with co-occurring disorders and for victims of sexual violence.	Homeless individuals at or below 220% of federal poverty level; victims of sexual violence (no income limits)	Public & Private	Statewide	RI DBHDDH
Education & Training Services	1,2	Nutrition education services to support chronic disease prevention while encouraging healthy eating habits with constrained resources	Organizations serving individuals below 200% federal poverty level	Public & Private	Statewide	DHS

Employment Services	1,2,4	• Employment services to behavioral healthcare clients.	Adults at or below 200% federal poverty level	Public & Private	Statewide	• RI DBHDDH
Home-Based Services	1,2,3	• Home-base services for survivors of domestic violence to support household and personal well-being while stabilizing after violence or trafficking.	Victims of domestic abuse and their families (no income limits)	Private	Statewide	
Housing	2,3	• Assisting individuals and families who are homeless and/or victims of domestic or intimate partner violence locate, obtain, and retain suitable housing.	Adults, families, and children at or below 200% of federal poverty level except for victims of sexual violence (no income limits)	Public & Private	Statewide	• RI Department of Housing
Independent/Transitional Living Services	1,2,3	• Recovery-focused permanent supportive housing and intensive housing stabilization services for adults transitioning from homelessness, emergency shelter, or residential recovery settings to independent living.	Homeless individuals	Private	Urban Core	
Information & Referral	1,2,3,4,5	• 365/24/7 helpline for information and referral services and referral services for specific populations dealing with homelessness and/or domestic violence	Adults, families, and children without income eligibility restrictions	Public & Private	Statewide	• RI DHS
Legal Services	1,2,3	• Facilitation of access to legal services to assist DV survivors in seeking legal protection and remedies in civil matters such as protective orders, custody, divorce, and housing.	Victims of domestic abuse and their families (no income limits)	Private	Statewide	
Prevention & Intervention Services	1,2,3,4	• Prevention and intervention services designed to support early identification of and timely response to domestic	Victims of domestic abuse and their families (no income limits)	Private	Statewide	

		and intimate partner violence and human trafficking, in order to prevent or reduce further harm to survivors and their families.				
Protective Services for Adults	1,2,3,4, 5	• Providing for basic needs to prevent hunger, destitution, and hospitalization. • Providing protective services to elderly from abuse or self-neglect. • Providing for basic needs in emergency situations. • Providing hygiene support for homeless individuals Providing a coordinated response to adult victims of sexual violence.	Adults at or below 200% of federal poverty level except in instances of elder abuse or self-neglect (no income limits)	Public & Private	Statewide	• RI Dept of Housing • RI Office of Healthy Aging
Protective Services for Children	1,2,3,4	• Providing for basic needs to prevent hunger, destitution, and hospitalization. • Providing for basic needs in emergency situations. • Services to protect and heal children who have experienced the trauma of sexual abuse.	Families and children at or below 200% of federal poverty level	Public & Private	Statewide	• RI Dept of Housing
Residential Treatment	2,5	• Residential treatment for dually-diagnosed people.	Adults at or below 200% federal poverty level.	Public & Private	Statewide	• RI DBHDDH
Substance Abuse Services	1,2,4	• Supporting 90-Day Recovery Shelter for homeless populations.	Adults at or below 200% federal poverty level	Public & Private	Statewide	• RI DBHDDH
Transportation	1,2,4	• Provision of non-emergency medical and other transportation services	Medicaid Eligible; Adults at or below 200% federal poverty level	Public & Private	Statewide	• EOHHS • RI Office of Healthy Aging