

BOARD AND SENIOR STAFF BIOS

Deborah J. Goddard. Ms. Goddard has 40 years of experience in housing and community development, spanning across a broad spectrum of disciplines, including law, policy, planning and real estate development. Ms. Goddard was nominated by Governor Daniel McKee to be Secretary of Housing in December 2024 and to serve as Chair of the Rhode Island Board of Commissioners in March 2025. Ms. Goddard consulted to the Rhode Island Department of Housing from August 2022 to December 2024. Previously, she served as Executive Vice President at the New York City Housing Authority from 2016 – 2019, where she oversaw a capital improvements portfolio valued at over \$3 billion and managed a staff of 350 persons. At MassHousing (MHFA), Ms. Goddard served as Managing Director for Policy and Program Development from 2014-2016. In this role, Ms. Goddard crafted initiatives to incorporate best practices into MassHousing’s lending programs across a range of subjects, including sustainability, resident services, and local planning capacity. From 2007 – 2014, Ms. Goddard served as General Counsel for MA Department of Housing & Community Development (DHCD). DHCD administered a breadth of housing programs including, but not limited to, HOME, LIHTC, CDBG, Ch. 40B, and fair housing. Prior experience includes positions with a Boston-based community development corporation, the Boston Housing Authority, Boston’s Department of Neighborhood Development, and the Planning Office for Urban Affairs, the affordable housing developer affiliated with the Archdiocese of Boston. Ms. Goddard received her law degree from Boston College Law School and her undergraduate degree from Wheaton College in Massachusetts.

Thomas Verdi. Thomas Verdi is Interim Director of the Department of Administration, where he oversees the administrative matters of State government, including overseeing the Office of Management and Budget; Accounts and Control; Division of Human Resources; Division of Enterprise Technology Strategy and Services; Division of Purchases; Office of Statewide Planning; Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Healthsource RI; and the Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance. Verdi joined the State of Rhode Island in 2023, when he was appointed Director of the Department of Revenue by Governor Dan McKee. Prior to his appointment, he served with the Providence Police Department for 35 years, retiring Deputy Chief of Police. Verdi holds a bachelor’s degree in finance from the University of Rhode Island and a master’s degree in criminal justice from Boston University. In 2016, he graduated from the FBI Academy where he served as class president. He serves on numerous commissions and boards, including the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association, the Providence Sports & Leadership, and Reentry Campus Program.

Maria Barry. Ms. Barry was appointed to the Board of Commissioners by Governor Gina Raimondo on March 8, 2016. She is the Community Development Banking National Executive of Bank of America Merrill Lynch (BAML)†. Ms. Barry began her career at Ernst & Young and joined BAML in 1987 in the Commercial Credit department. She went on to hold several risk management roles related to training, technology, and asset quality reporting for the Board of Directors. She was promoted to Director of Community Reinvestment Act in 1999, also serving as chair to the Fair

Lending Policy Committee. In 2003, she joined BAML's commercial Real Estate Team as Director of Regional Relationship Management where she was responsible for launching a new business to meet the needs of small-to-mid-sized developers. She became the Community Development Banking Market Executive for the Northeast in 2004 and National Executive in February, 2009. Ms. Barry majored in accounting and has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Connecticut. Her term expired on July 1, 2020. Under the Act, she continues to serve until a successor is appointed and qualified.

James Dioffa. James A. Dioffa was elected Rhode Island General Treasurer in November 2022 and sworn in on January 3, 2023. Treasurer Dioffa is committed to serving as a responsible and active steward, protecting the livelihoods of our current and future pensioners, and promoting economic growth by expanding opportunities for all Rhode Islanders through thoughtful, transparent, and equity-focused leadership. Throughout his years in public service, Treasurer Dioffa demonstrated his commitment to giving residents the tools and opportunities for creating sustainable wealth. This commitment continues by making information readily available - and easy to access - to current and future pensioners as well as the general public and providing assistance to municipal governments requiring pension-related guidance. In addition, he is a key champion for expanded financial literacy in our schools to further help individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency. Raised and educated in Central Falls, Rhode Island, Treasurer Dioffa served as a member of the City Council and Mayor of Central Falls, becoming the youngest mayor to date in our state's long history. During his tenure as mayor, he helped Central Falls recover from the effects of bankruptcy and prior years of mismanagement. After completing two terms as mayor, he went on to serve as a Senior Advisor at Brown University's Policy Lab. Treasurer Dioffa is a graduate of Becker College. He lives in Pawtucket with his fiancée, Sandra Cano, their daughter, Arianna, and their newborn son, Alessandro.

Stephen P. McAllister. Mr. McAllister was appointed to the Board of Commissioners on April 3, 2014. Mr. McAllister is Vice President of the Eastern Region for the US Chamber of Commerce. The eastern region covers the six New England states, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, West Virginia and Maryland. Mr. McAllister works with chambers of commerce, members of Congress in each state, their staffs, trade associations and the media across the region to support the US Chamber's agenda. The US Chamber's goal is "to generate stronger, more robust economic growth, create jobs, and expand opportunity for all Americans." Mr. McAllister has experience working in both federal and state government. Mr. McAllister was Director of Advance for Rhode Island Governor Lincoln D. Chafee (D-RI), and also a Constituent and Community Liaison for United States Senator John E. Sununu (R-NH). Mr. McAllister was elected to the Warwick City Council in November, 2006. His term expired on July 1, 2017. Under the Act, he continues to serve until a successor is appointed and qualified.

Kevin D. Orth. Mr. Orth was appointed to the Board of Commissioners on June 30, 2015. Mr. Orth is co-Founder and Managing Member of Atlantic American Partners, LLC, a for-profit affordable housing development company based in Providence, RI. Prior to forming Atlantic American in 2001, Mr. Orth was Vice President in charge of acquisitions for Pacific American Properties, Inc. of Sausalito, California and prior to that position was an acquisitions associate at

Leggat McCall Properties in Boston. Mr. Orth received a Master of City Planning degree from the University of California, Berkeley and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Maryland. Mr. Orth's term expired on July 1, 2021. Under the Act, he continues to serve until a successor is appointed and qualified.

Staff

The corporate staff, under the direction of the Executive Director, includes professionals and staff members working in Rhode Island Housing's six divisions: executive, finance, homeownership and customer service, development, loan servicing and resident services. Senior professional staff members of Rhode Island Housing include the following:

Carol Ventura – Executive Director. Ms. Ventura was named Executive Director of Rhode Island Housing in September 2019. Rhode Island Housing is the state's housing bank providing mortgages for homebuyers and financing for the production and preservation of rental apartments. Rhode Island Housing has nearly \$3 billion in assets and 240 employees. Ms. Ventura has 30 years of experience in expanding access to housing, building livable communities and leading economic development efforts. Previously, Ms. Ventura was appointed Director of Development in May 2005 and appointed Deputy Director on June 23, 2014. She joined Rhode Island Housing in August of 2001 as the Policy Programs Manager and was appointed Assistant Director of the Policy Division in 2002. Prior to joining Rhode Island Housing, Ms. Ventura worked as the Executive Director of a Community Development organization in northern Rhode Island. Ms. Ventura received a Master of Business Administration from Bryant University and a Bachelor of Science degree from Bryant College.

James Comer – Deputy Executive Director. Mr. Comer joined RIHousing in February 2020. Prior to returning to RIHousing, Mr. Comer served as Executive Director of Women's Development Corporation, a nonprofit developer of affordable housing throughout New England. Prior to that, Mr. Comer served as Director of Operations for both the Cambridge (MA) and Fall River (MA) Housing Authorities. He also served as a development officer at RIHousing from 2004-2006. Mr. Comer received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Sociology from Boston College and a Master of Science degree in Public Affairs from the University of Massachusetts, Boston.

Kara L. Lachapelle – Chief Financial Officer. Ms. Lachapelle joined Rhode Island Housing in October, 2001 and served as Assistant Controller from 2001 to 2007. She was appointed Controller in January, 2007, appointed Director of Finance in September, 2010 and appointed Chief Financial Officer in December, 2013. From 1997 to 2001, Ms. Lachapelle held various positions in public accounting at Rooney, Plotkin & Willey, specializing in governmental and non-profit audit clients. Ms. Lachapelle also worked in the Trust Department at Durfee Attleboro Bank. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and received a Bachelor of Science degree from Bryant College.

Brett Pelletier- Chief Administrative Officer. Mr. Pelletier joined RIHousing in 2023 and serves as Chief Administrative Officer. Prior to joining RIHousing, Brett spent 18 years with Kirk&Company: Real Estate Counselors in Boston, ultimately serving as Chief Operating Officer. During his tenure, he advised public and private clients on commercial real estate strategy and Affordable Housing initiatives, delivering market analysis, valuation, advisory, due diligence, and underwriting services totaling more than \$6 billion in real estate value nationwide. He is a member of the Counselors of Real Estate (CRE), a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), and an active member of Lambda Alpha International, the Urban Land Institute (ULI), and the Boston Economic Club. Brett is on the faculty of the Cummings Graduate School of Architecture at Roger Williams University, where he teaches courses in real estate economics.

Christine Hunsinger – Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer. Ms. Hunsinger joined Rhode Island Housing in October, 2017, as Assistant Deputy Director of Policy and Research, responsible for providing strategic guidance and leadership to the Agency in the development of its goals and initiatives. Prior to joining Rhode Island Housing, Ms. Hunsinger was CEO of the strategic communications/public affairs firm BGP Strategies. She has served in several academic and public positions within the State of Rhode Island, including faculty roles at Rhode Island College and Brown, and Director of Legislative Affairs in the Lincoln Chaffee administration. Ms. Hunsinger holds a Bachelor's degree from St. Anselm, and a Master's degree of Public Affairs from Brown University.

Corinne Myers – General Counsel. Ms. Myers joined the Legal Department of RIHousing in 2010, and was promoted to Deputy General Counsel in 2015. In 2021, she was appointed General Counsel. Ms. Myers holds a Juris Doctor degree from New York University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College. She is a member of the Rhode Island Bar Association, the Association of Corporate Counsel, and the American Bar Association's Forum on Affordable Housing & Community Development Law and Public Sector Lawyers Division. Ms. Myers is admitted to the bar in the states of Rhode Island and Massachusetts (inactive).

Bernadette MacArthur – Director of Finance. Ms. Lynch was appointed Director of Finance in April 2019. She joined RIHousing in 2015 as a Finance Analyst and led the implementation of the in-house Secondary Marketing Department beginning in May 2017. Prior to joining RIHousing, Ms. Lynch worked for Citizens Bank, N.A. in the treasury group, where she was responsible for commercial loan forecasting and liquidity analysis. Ms. Lynch received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance from the University of Rhode Island.

Leslie McKnight – Assistant Deputy Director of Loan Servicing. Ms. McKnight was appointed Director of Loan Servicing in September, 2003 and was appointed Assistant Deputy Director of Loan Servicing in January, 2017. She joined Rhode Island Housing in June, 1995 as the Default Manager. She was appointed Assistant Director of Loan Servicing in July, 2000. Prior to her employment at Rhode Island Housing, Ms. McKnight worked as a Loan Workout Specialist for Plymouth Mortgage Company from 1991 to 1995. Between 1982 and 1991, she held various positions in Retail Banking and Mortgage Lending including Assistant Branch Manager at Citizens Bank. Ms. McKnight received her Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from Bryant College.

Peter C. Pagonis – Director of Homeownership. Mr. Pagonis joined Rhode Island Housing in October, 2013 as Lender Services Manager and was appointed Director of Homeownership in August, 2015. Prior to joining Rhode Island Housing, Mr. Pagonis worked as a Business Development Advisor with the Peace Corps in León, Nicaragua. From 2000 to 2010, Mr. Pagonis was a Corporate Banking Associate at FleetBoston Financial, a Loan Officer at Bank of America, and an Assistant Vice President at Bank Rhode Island. Mr. Pagonis received a Master of Business Administration degree from Boston University Questrom School of Business and a Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Lawrence University.

Melanie Brewer, J.D. – Director of Development. Ms. Brewer joined RIHousing as the Director of Real Estate Development in 2025. She previously served as Senior Programs Administrator at the Arizona Department of Housing, overseeing the Rental and Asset Management Divisions. Under her leadership, her team committed funding to more than 9,000 housing units and placed another 5,000 in service in just two years. Ms. Brewer has deep expertise in LIHTC and gap financing, and experience spanning public and private sectors. Melanie earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Kansas, along with a Tribal Lawyer Certificate, and holds a Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies with a minor in Political Science from Park University.

Michael DiChiaro – Director of Leased Housing and Rental Services. Michael DiChiaro joined Rhode Island Housing in December 1994 and has held roles of increasing responsibility before being appointed the Director of Leased Housing and Rental Services in June 2022. Michael is responsible for oversight of the physical and financial condition of Rhode Island Housing’s multifamily rental portfolio and leads a team that monitors compliance with various federal and state programs used to finance and support rental developments throughout Rhode Island, including the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, HOME and HUD’s Project Based Rental Assistance. In addition, Michael oversees the Corporation’s Housing Choice Voucher Program, providing rental subsidies to individuals and families in twenty cities and towns throughout Rhode Island. Prior to joining Rhode Island Housing, Michael held various positions in retail banking at both Citizens and Old Stone Banks. Michael holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Resource Economics and Commerce from the University of Rhode Island.

Amy Rainone- Director of Government Relations and Policy. Amy Rainone serves as the agency’s Director of Government Relations and Policy, having begun her career at RIHousing in 2000 as the Policy and Planning Manager. In her current role, Ms. Rainone facilitates efforts between Rhode Island’s U.S. Congressional delegation, the Rhode Island General Assembly and Governor’s office, and locally elected officials to address issues regarding housing, homelessness and community development. She has extensive governmental and legislative experience and previously served as a Legislative Assistant and Project Coordinator for U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy, working on housing, community development, appropriations and constituent concerns.