

**Request for Action  
By  
Board of Commissioners**

**Approval of FY 2022 Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Awards Program Funding**

**1. Summary of Request**

This Request for Action (“RFA”) is for approval to fund the Fiscal Year 2022 Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Awards Program. The Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Awards support students from diverse backgrounds to pursue academic fields or careers related to the housing industry.

This awards program honors the life and work of Michael S. Van Leesten. Born and raised in Providence, Van Leesten was dedicated to improving the lives of Rhode Islanders through his business leadership, civil rights activism, and public service. He was the founder and Executive Director of Opportunities Industrialization Center of Rhode Island, a non-profit offering career coaching, job training, and support for small businesses in urban communities. Van Leesten previously served as the Chairman of RIHousing, and also held leadership positions with the NAACP, Urban League, and the Black Heritage Society.

This awards program consists of a \$5,000 scholarship for a student pursuing building construction or a related field and a \$5,000 scholarship for a student pursuing an academic degree related to the housing field; and a summer fellowship for a student to develop professional experience in housing policy, research and analysis through an in-depth project.

Previously, RIHousing released applications for the awards program, a committee consisting of staff from the Development Division, Leased Housing and Rental Services Division, Finance Division, and Jill Van Leesten, Van Leesten’s daughter, reviewed each proposal in accordance with scoring criteria, and made awards directly.

This year, in order to attract a greater number of diverse applicants, RIHousing desires to provide funding to the Rhode Island College Foundation and New England Institute of Technology (the “Institutions”). The Institutions will each create a Michael S. Van Leesten scholarship fund from which to make awards to eligible students. The Institutions will administer their scholarship applications in the fall, with awards made around November or December 2022.

**2. Recommendation**

Staff recommends approval of the attached resolution authorizing the funding of the Fiscal Year 2022 Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Awards Program in partnership with the Institutions as set forth at Attachment A.

**3. Attachments**

- A. Proposed Fiscal Year 2022 Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Awards Program Funding
- B. Resolution

**Attachment A**

**Proposed FY2022 Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Awards Program Funding**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Scholarship Funding</b>
Rhode Island College Foundation	\$5,000
New England Institute of Technology	\$5,000

**Attachment B**  
**Resolution of the Board of Commissioners**  
**of**  
**Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation**

**WHEREAS:** Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) created the Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Awards Program in memory of Michael S. Van Leesten; and

**WHEREAS:** RIHousing desires to partner with Rhode Island College Foundation and New England Institute of Technology (the “Institutions”) to increase the number of qualified and diverse applicants.

**NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY:**

**RESOLVED:** that funding for scholarships under the Michael S. Van Leesten Memorial Awards Program is hereby approved in the amounts and to the Institutions specified at Attachment A.

**RESOLVED:** that all funds provided hereunder shall be funded out of the FY 2022 budget of RIHousing.

**RESOLVED:** that the Executive Director and the Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer, each acting singly, be and hereby are authorized and empowered to take any and all actions necessary or desirable to carry out the foregoing resolutions, including the negotiation of terms and conditions of contracts, instruments, and other documents to effectuate the foregoing.