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RIHousing and R.I. Office of Energy Resources funding awards will support the development of zero net energy housing for R.I.

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Providence, RI RIHousing and the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) have awarded funds to develop highly energy efficient housing for low- and moderate-income Rhode Islanders. The pilot program, Zero Energy for the Ocean State (ZEOS), is the result of a public-private partnership between RIHousing, OER and National Grid to explore innovative, replicable solutions to utilize cost saving, clean energy technologies in homes.

“RIHousing is committed to developing housing that Rhode Islanders can afford,” said Carol Ventura, executive director at RIHousing.

RIHousing and OER have committed a total of \$675,000 in funding to three developers who will produce a range of building types in rural, suburban and urban parts of the state.

All three recipients of ZEOS Demonstration funds will develop stock plans to ensure replicability of their zero energy designs. The projects are:

- Caldwell & Johnson: to construct a single-story duplex rental for seniors 55+ in North Kingstown. The development includes two, one-bedroom, one-bath units. Caldwell & Johnson has built this model previously and are committed to providing much needed affordable housing for seniors in the North Kingstown area.
- Church Community Housing Corp. (CCHC): to construct eight, single-family homes in Jamestown and Aquidneck Island. Seven of the homes will be new construction and one includes the rehabilitation of an existing building. CCHC will also develop a building manual that will be easily replicable by small homebuilders.
- One Neighborhood Builders: to construct five, small single-family, solar-powered homes in the Olneyville neighborhood of Providence. Homes will be constructed as part of a training program with Providence-based, non-profit Building Futures and in partnership with the Rhode Island School of Design and the city of Providence.

“Expanding access to cost-effective energy efficiency measures is vital to Rhode Island’s clean energy future,” said state energy commissioner Carol Grant. “The state has made great strides to expand our energy efficiency programs to more people. The ZEOS program is one more way we are

working to support renewable and green energy efforts.”

Developers will design and construct affordable, Zero Energy Buildings (ZEBs). ZEBs are defined as any energy-efficient building with zero net energy consumption, meaning the total amount of energy used by a building on an annual basis is roughly equal to the amount of renewable energy created on the site.

In addition to meeting ZEB standards, developers must also participate in National Grid’s Residential New Construction Program (www.ngrid.com/save) and will work closely with program partners throughout the design, construction, and data collection phases.

“We’re excited with the level of innovation and commitment to energy efficient projects in the funding applications received,” said Chris Porter, director of customer energy management at National Grid. “Applicants will deploy a range of methods, including new and emerging technologies, thoughtful design, and sustainable building materials to meet program goals while creating a pathway for scaling ZEBs in low- and moderate-income residential sectors as a means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

Funding awards were announced at the meeting of the RIHousing Board of Commissioners. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was released in July 2019 with initial funding of \$250,000 available. In response to the strength of applications, the RIHousing Board of Commissioners approved an additional \$375,000 to fully support the three projects.

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