



Opening a Recovery Residence

How to open a recovery residence in Rhode Island

Updated 6.30.26



Intro to RICARES

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**Rhode Island Communities for
Addiction Recovery Efforts (RICARES)
is a nonprofit organization dedicated
to supporting individuals and families
affected by addiction.**

RICARES provides peer support, educational workshops, advocacy efforts, recovery housing certification, workforce development through the Rhode Island Peer Recovery Professional Association (RIPRPA), and community outreach initiatives.

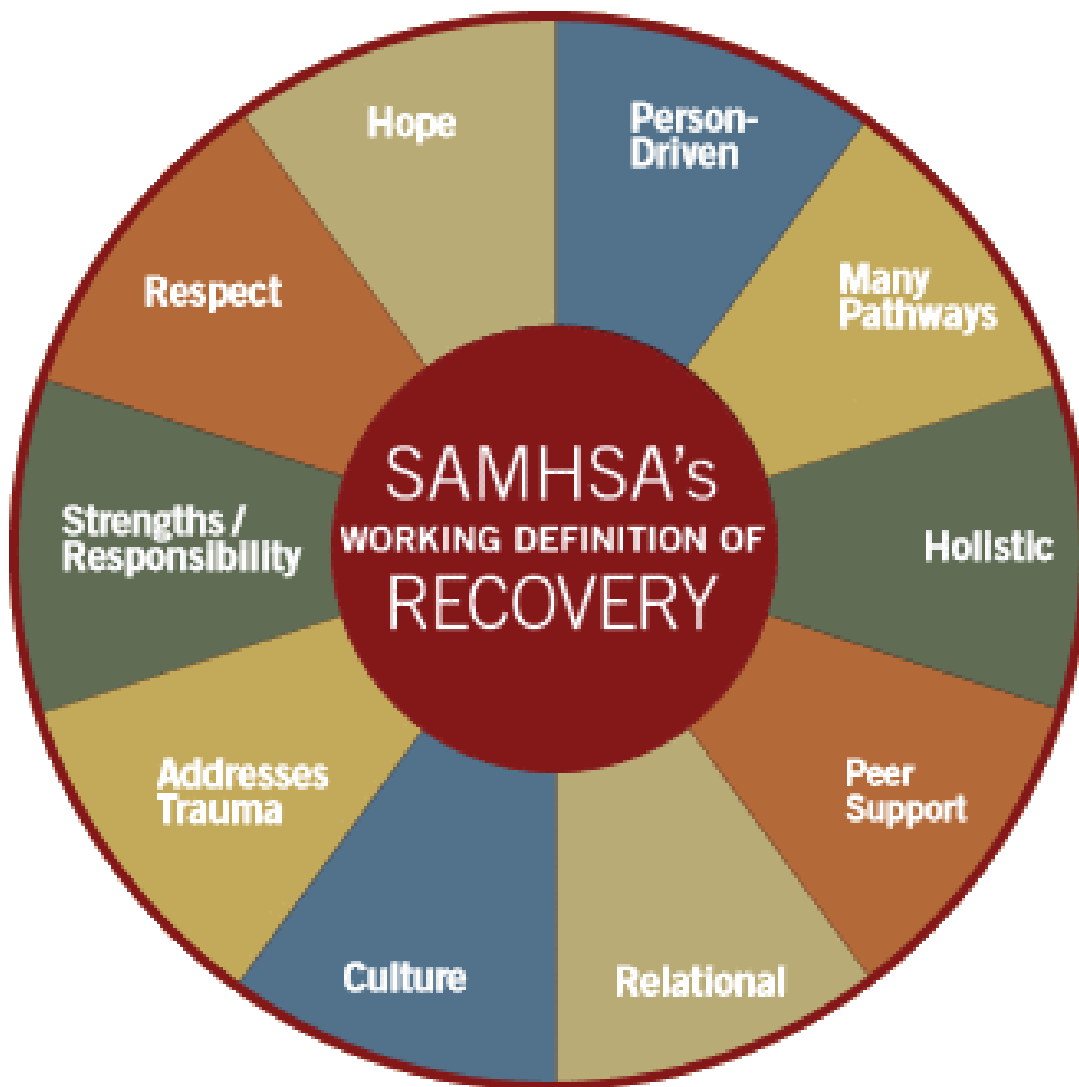
RICARES believes that safe and affordable housing is a crucial piece of recovery support services. As the State's NARR Affiliate, **we certify recovery residences in Rhode Island based on the national standards set forth by the National Alliance of Recovery Residences (NARR).**



**In addition to certification, RICARES will
provide no cost technical assistance, training,
and support to all certified recovery
residences in RI.**

What is Recovery?

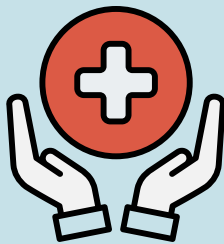
SAMHSA defines recovery as a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life and strive to reach their full potential.



What Supports Recovery?

SAMHSA's Four Major Dimensions That Support Recovery:

HEALTH



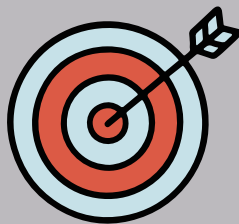
Making informed, healthy choices that support physical and emotional wellbeing.

HOME



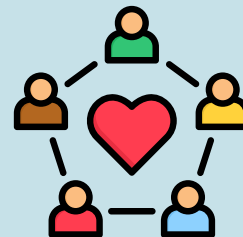
A stable and safe place to live.

PURPOSE



Meaningful daily activities and the independence, income and resources to participate in society.

COMMUNITY



Relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope.

Recovery Residence 101



This toolkit aims to provide information and resources to property owners or groups looking to open recovery residence(s) in Rhode Island

While recovery residences vary widely in structure, all are centered on peer support and a connection to services that promote long-term recovery. Recovery housing benefits individuals in recovery by reinforcing a substance-free lifestyle and providing direct connections to other peers in recovery, mutual support groups and recovery support services.

Becoming NARR certified in Rhode Island is a process the Recovery House Program Staff at RICARES is here to help you with. Our services are offered free of charge with the aim of creating a network of safe recovery supportive services to all Rhode Island residents. As the Rhode Island NARR affiliate, the RICARES Recovery House Program Staff is here to assist you in the process of becoming certified and increasing residents recovery capital with support and care.



What is a Recovery Residence?



A recovery residence (also known as a sober living home or halfway house) is a structured, supportive environment for individuals recovering from addiction, promoting the acquisition and practice of vital recovery skills.

These homes offer a supportive and substance-free environment, fostering a sense of community and accountability among residents.

Rhode Island recovery residences are an essential component of the recovery process, providing a bridge between primary treatment and the return to independent living.

Why is Expanding Recovery Residences in Rhode Island Important?

Stable and safe housing is considered a major dimension of recovery according to SAMHSA, and can greatly improve recovery outcomes. Research shows that lack of access to safe and affordable housing can increase substance use disorder related risks, including increased risk of overdose.

By offering a foundation for healing, community support, and essential life skills, recovery homes play a pivotal role in helping individuals build a strong and lasting recovery.

What is NARR?

“National Alliance for Recovery Residences (NARR) is a leading nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding the availability of well-operated, ethical, and supportive recovery housing across the United States...

NARR operates in partnership with a network of state-level affiliate organizations which implement NARR’s standards and programs in their states.”

National Alliance for Recovery Residences

The NARR standard clearly delineates the spectrum of housing support available for those in recovery from substance use disorders. It sets forth four separate **“levels of support”** representing the type and intensity of services offered.



Levels of Support



Level 1 (Type P)*

Peer-run, decisions made solely by residents. No staff on site, owners serve as landlords.



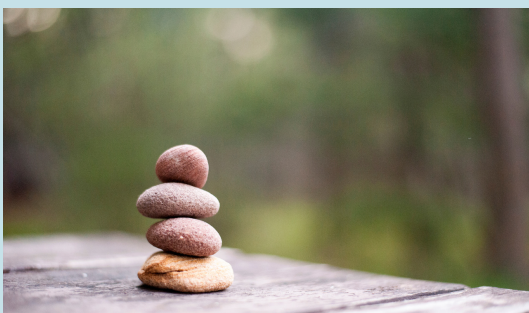
Level 2 (Type M)*

Managed environment, compensated house manager, appointed house leader, set house procedures.



Level 3 (Type S)*

Delivers weekly, structured programming including peer-based and other recovery support services such as life skills development programming



Level 4 (Type C)*

Integrates the social and medical model typically using a combination of supervised peer and professional staff

Social Model of Recovery

The heart of all recovery residences is the Social Model, an operational framework that distinguishes these environments from other shared living spaces. This model emphasizes the importance of personal and collective responsibility for the safety and progressive health of oneself and others in the community.



Strengths-based lived experience, peer leadership, participative governance, and community-based support networks are the foundational elements for lasting recovery.

How to Open a Certified Recovery Residence



Step One:

- Identify and secure property
- Create/provide proof of legal business status (i.e. LLC., Inc., etc.)
- Procure general liability insurance
- Ensure home is up to code
- Comply with state and federal requirements
- Create operational policies, procedures, and financial tracking system.
- Determine level of support (levels 1-4)
- Take free NARR training provide by RICARES.
- Have an understanding of recovery and the social model.

Step 2: Certification: On **RICARES.Org**, under **HOUSING**:

1. Open and review the [RICARES Certification Application](#) located on RICARES.org and other online documents describing our requirements and the certification process.
2. Complete the Certification Pre-Inspection Checklist.
3. Gather then scan the required documents.
4. Complete and submit the online [RICARES Certification Application](#).
This is the step where you will upload all required documents.
5. After you have submitted all required documents, RICARES will review for completeness then schedule an inspection.
6. Once the inspection has passed, you will receive certification.

Key Considerations

Location is everything as many residents do not own a vehicle. Ideally, recovery residences are in close proximity to:

- Public transportation
- Laundromat
- Grocery stores
- Recovery Community Centers
- Treatment providers

There are certain requirements for the physical property of a recovery residence:

- Each bedroom needs to have 75 ft.² (+50SF per additional person, i.e.: 2 person room=125 SF)
- Each bedroom needs adequate storage per resident (dressers, closets, etc.)
- One refrigerator for every 5 residents, and adequate pantry storage for each resident
- 1 full bathroom for every 5 residents
- The residence should be inspected and fire code compliant
- The house should be “move-in-ready” prior to inspection



Benefits of Opening a Certified Recovery House

Community Building

Improving access to housing to those who need it, benefits the entire community.

Recovery residences are Good Neighbors. Residents are often engaged in the local community by helping out neighbors and volunteering, improving the quality of life for the entire neighborhood.

Studies show that individuals residing in recovery homes have decreased rates of incarceration and higher rates of employment (Jason et al., 2007).

Support Recovery

Recovery residences support individual and collective healing and growth.

Access to recovery housing can improve individual outcomes including, decreased substance use, increased income, better family and social functioning, and an overall improved quality of life (Jason et al., 2007).

Recovery homes serve as a crucial supportive environment to those in early recovery, aiding the development of Recovery Capital.

Meaningful Business impact

Turn income properties into a supportive environment that can influence positive change.

Increasing recovery residence access helps to fill a critical gap in the recovery continuum of care.

The house will never be vacant, ensuring consistent income from rental property.

Helpful Documents

Click names for link or scan QR code



[Landlord Toolkit:](#)



[Pre-inspection Checklist:](#)



[NARR Compendium:](#)



[NARR Code of Ethics:](#)

Helpful Websites

Click names for link or scan QR code

RICARES:



BHDDH:



NARR:



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What happens after I submit an application for Recovery House Certification?

A: RICARES staff will reach out to you and provide a link where you can upload all of the required documents necessary for certification. RICARES will review your submitted documents to ensure completion. If all of your submitted documents are complete and in compliance, RICARES will schedule on site inspection. *(See page 10 of this handbook)*

Q: What should I expect from the inspection process?

A: First, review the pre-Inspection checklist. This will give you an idea of what the inspector will be looking for. Inspections are thorough and can take several hours, prepare accordingly! Once you pass the inspection, you will receive your certification! *(See inspection checklist on page 13 of this handbook)*

Q: What happens if I don't pass the inspection?

A: RICARES staff will work with you on what it is you need to pass inspection. We will then conduct a second inspection or request photo/video documentation of necessary changes made in order to pass inspection. Once you pass inspection, you will receive certification!

Q: How will I receive referrals to fill the beds?

A: We suggest that you reach out to local treatments providers, recovery centers, etc., to let them know you are open and receiving referrals. You can create marketing materials to conduct outreach. If you apply for and receive recovery house funding from BHDDH, you can receive referrals from the recovery housing hotline's waitlist (942-STOP). See [BHDDH's Recovery Housing Website](#) for more.

Q: How can I apply for funding?

A: The BHDDH grant for recovery house funding is open for applications once a year. [Contact BHDDH for more info.](#)

DEFINITIONS

BHDDH: Rhode Island's Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals

Levels of Support: Recovery Residence Levels define the range of recovery housing. All recovery residences offer alcohol and illicit substance-free living environments and utilize a social model recovery approach. They are differentiated by the intensity of staffing, governance, and recovery support services.

MOUD: Medications for Opioid Use Disorder

NARR: National Alliance for Recovery Residences

Recovery: A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.

Recovery Capital: Refers to the internal and external resources that an individual can access to begin and sustain recovery from addiction or mental health conditions. These resources span personal strengths, social networks, and community or cultural supports

Recovery Residences: A recovery residence (also known as a sober living home or halfway house) is a structured, supportive environment for individuals recovering from addiction, promoting the acquisition and practice of vital recovery skills.

Social Model: The heart of all recovery residences is the Social Model, an operational framework that distinguishes these environments from other shared living spaces. This model emphasizes the importance of personal and collective responsibility for the safety and progressive health of oneself and others in the community. Strengths-based lived experience, peer leadership, participative governance, and community-based support networks are the foundational elements for lasting recovery.

References

Recovery Residence Outcomes:

[Ohio Recovery Housing Environmental Scan
2013](#)



Recovery Definitions and Dimensions:

[SAMHSA's Working Definition of Recovery](#)



NARR:

[National Alliance for Recovery Residences](#)

