

ACLU KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Rhode Island **RHODE ISLAND HOMELESS BILL OF RIGHTS**

On June 20, 2012, Governor Chafee signed the Homeless Bill of Rights into law, making Rhode Island the first state in the nation to formally protect the rights of those experiencing homelessness. The law, RIGL § 34-37.1-3, states:

“No person’s rights, privileges, or access to public services may be denied or abridged solely because he or she is homeless. Such a person shall be granted the same rights and privileges as any other resident of this state.”

Right to public space

You have the right to use all public sidewalks, public parks, public transportation, and public buildings like all other residents. You cannot be told to “move along” because of how you look or because you have belongings with you.

Right to equal treatment

You have the right to equal treatment by all state and municipal agencies, including but not limited to libraries, police, RIPTA, EMS, city and town halls, parks, and the Rhode Island State House.

Right to employment nondiscrimination

Employers are not allowed to not hire you just because your address is a shelter or because they think or know you are experiencing homeless.

Right to emergency medical care

You cannot be denied medical care or emergency services because of your housing status. You have the right to be treated like any other patient when you seek medical attention.

Right to vote

You cannot be kept from registering to vote because of your lack of an address. You cannot be prevented from voting at your local polling place because of your lack of address.

Right to protection of records

Your personal records are protected and confidential. Such records include but are not limited to: shelter sign-in lists, service provider records, waiting lists, and medical records.

Right to privacy

Your personal belongings (such as a backpack or a tent) are protected from search or seizure as if you were in a house, under the 4th amendment

If you have been discriminated against on the basis of your housing status

Write down or record as much of the incident as you can (what happened, where, when, and who). Try to get the name, badge number, license plate, and other identifying information about the person or law enforcement officer who was discriminatory.

Organizations you can contact

- Rhode Island Homeless Advocacy Project (RIHAP): RIHomelessAdvocacyProject@proton.me
Attend a RI Homeless Advocacy Project meeting on Wednesdays, 12pm-1pm, 134 Matthewson St, Providence
- American Civil Liberties Union of Rhode Island: (401) 831-7171, info@riaclu.org