

2026 -- H 7564

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LC004676

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

AN ACT

RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- HOME-FIT DWELLING UNITS

Introduced By: Representatives Spears, Speakman, Carson, McEntee, Azzinaro, Kennedy, Stewart, Cotter, Donovan, and Boylan
Date Introduced: February 06, 2026

Referred To: House Municipal Government & Housing

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 45 of the General Laws entitled "TOWNS AND CITIES" is hereby
2 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

CHAPTER 24.8

HOME-FIT DWELLING UNITS

45-24.8-1. Short title.

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as “Home-Fit Dwelling Units”.

45-24.8-2. Definitions.

8 As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(1) "Accessibility" means architectural designs that promote ease of entry and increased

10 ease of movement within a residential dwelling for residents and visitors with physical disabilities,
11 primarily those who use mobility equipment.

(2) "Authorized agency" means and includes the Rhode Island executive office of housing

13 and any city or town agency or official authorized to issue building permits or building certificates
14 of occupancy.

(3) "Covered dwelling unit" means any new housing development permitted on or after

16 July 1, 2027 with four (4) or more dwelling units that:

17 (i) Receives any state financial assistance including, but not limited to, grants, loans, tax
18 credits, bond proceeds, or below-market financing; or

19 (ii) Is developed on land owned by or conveyed from the state or a quasi-state entity.

(4) "Design provisions" means Type A and Type B dwelling units as defined in ICC A117.1-2017 (ANSI A117.1-2017), as incorporated into the Rhode Island state building code, unless a later edition is expressly adopted by regulation.

(5) "Dwelling unit" means a single unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

(6) "Home-fit" means a residential dwelling that is designed and constructed in compliance with this chapter to incorporate design features that provide safe and convenient use regardless of age or physical ability.

(7) "Secretary" means the secretary of the executive office of housing which is authorized to implement the provisions of this chapter.

45-24.8-3. Requirements.

(a) This chapter shall apply to all new construction, of covered dwelling units, with at least ten percent (10%) following Type A standards and an additional twenty-five percent (25%) of covered dwelling units following Type B standards.

(b) Complying units may be identified as “Home-Fit dwelling units”.

(c) No changes required for units permitted before the effective date.

(d) Standards supplement existing codes; where conflicts occur, this chapter controls.

(e) Alternative designs allowed with approval if providing equal or greater accessibility.

45-24.8-4. Seller disclosure.

Sellers of covered dwelling units shall provide written disclosure at the time of first conveyance indicating whether the unit complies with Type A or Type B design provisions under this chapter.

45-24.8-5. Exceptions.

A waiver may be granted by a municipal building official only upon a written finding that compliance is technically infeasible due to site conditions, structural constraints, or topographical limitations, and not solely due to increased cost or reduced profitability.

45-24.8-6. Implementation.

(a) The executive office of housing, in partnership with the state building code commission and municipalities, shall develop:

(1) The criteria under which a waiver would be granted to a developer, in whole or in part, from the Type A and B requirements outlined above.

(2) The criteria for considering an appeal for the denial of a waiver request, in whole or in part, from the Type A and B requirements outlined above

1 (b) A draft of these criteria must be posted for a thirty (30) day public comment period,
2 beginning no later than November 1, 2027. These criteria shall be completed no later than
3 December 31, 2028, and shall be implemented effective July 1, 2029.

4 (c) Local permitting authorities shall not issue a building permit for any covered units that
5 do not comply with the applicable standards after the effective date unless the development has
6 received a waiver and the proposed design is consistent with that waiver.

7 (d) If the required criteria are not adopted by December 31, 2028, the Type A and Type B
8 requirements set forth in § 45-24.8-3 shall apply without waiver until such criteria are adopted.

9 **45-24.8-7. Reporting.**

10 (a) Municipalities shall submit all applicable data to the executive office of housing no later than
11 July 1, 2028 and each year thereafter including, but not limited to, the number of building permits
12 and certificates of occupancy issued in the preceding calendar year that included the Type A
13 standard and the number of building permits and certificates of occupancy issued in the preceding
14 calendar year that included the Type B standard , as well as the number of waivers granted and an
15 aggregate of the reasons under which the waivers were granted. The executive office of housing
16 shall submit an annual report to the general assembly based on this municipal data commencing on
17 October 1, 2028.

18 (b) The building code commission shall report to the department of housing no later than
19 July 1, 2028, and each year thereafter, the number of appeals heard related to Type A units and the
20 outcomes of those appeals and the number of the appeals heard related to Type B units and the
21 outcomes of those appeals, as well as the aggregate of the reasons under which the appeals were
22 granted or denied.

23 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage for purposes of rulemaking and
24 implementation and shall apply to covered dwelling units permitted on or after July 1, 2027.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO TOWNS AND CITIES -- HOME-FIT DWELLING UNITS

- 1 This act would create the home-fit dwelling units act to apply to all new construction of
- 2 covered dwelling units to incorporate design features that provide safe and convenient use to the
- 3 greatest extent feasible, regardless of age or physical ability.
- 4 This act would take effect upon passage for purposes of rulemaking and implementation
- 5 and shall apply to covered dwelling units permitted on or after July 1, 2027.

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