

Real Impact = Better Lives



Feliciana comes to our pantry and it's because of Better Lives RI she was able to provide a nice Christmas to her children. Prior to our offering, Feliciana did not know what she was going to do. Feliciana is a single mom struggling with 3 children. Better Lives was able to provide a Christmas Dinner along with several toys for her children. In her own words "Thank You to everyone, I was not expecting all of this. My children's smiles said it all."

Rose her partner Annel and one year old, Samuel, were referred to BLRI by Matthewson Street church to seek help for shelter and housing. After being evicted from their last apartment due to the landlord raising their rent to an unaffordable amount, they were left staying in the basement of a church who didn't want to see them living in their car. Annel has been unable to obtain a job because he has been waiting almost a year for his new work visa. On top of this, fear of ICE intervention and possible deportation was causing the family great anxiety. A Better Lives case manager helped to ensure their safety by connecting them with the Refugee Dream Center and obtaining the necessary documents needed for them to enter Amos House Family shelter. Now, the family is safe in shelter and are in the process of paying off the debt they owe to their previous landlord while saving up for a new apartment. In the end they were laughing and showing extreme gratitude for the efforts made by Better Lives to ensure they didn't end up on the street or in ICE's custody.

A letter from grateful parents: For seventeen years, our daughter Korby had been addicted to drugs and alcohol and she was lost to the streets. We watched, brokenhearted, as she went from sober houses and treatment centers, back to the streets and then to prison. But seven months ago, she was discharged from prison and was accepted into Pete and Andy's Place and a transformation began. The old Korby began to emerge and has continued to grow stronger and more resilient. She is committed to her sobriety every day. Pete & Andy's Place has allowed our daughter to turn her life around and, because of this life-saving program, our hearts are full. Please consider supporting this life-changing program. Sincerely, Julie and Vinnie



Jose is disabled and had been unhoused for years, living in a tent. A BLRI Outreach worker was able to make contact with him last May, and over the past 10 months gained Jose's trust and gave him hope to keep hanging on and showing up for himself. Jose began to share about the trauma he has experienced and the difficulties he's had living in a tent ranging from theft and threats of violence, to people forcing him to do very regrettable things. After everything that's happened to him, good and bad, he never gave up, and with the help of BLRI he is now safely living in supportive housing. Jose's story goes much deeper than this, but the apartment is the first step to other opportunities and a brighter future.

Thank You Supporters!



And all of our many generous donors – Thank you!

Better Lives Rhode Island

Impact Report 2025 - 2026

Summary



With a mission of providing hope for a better tomorrow, while helping homeless and hungry people survive today, Better Lives Rhode Island has been advocating for basic human rights, equality and justice since 1974. Through our Food Pantry (est. 1974), Community Meal (est. 1979), Homeless Outreach and Day Center programs (est. 2004), and Pete & Andy's Place (est. 2025) we provide food and supportive services with compassion to 22000+ people annually.

Last year our Food Pantry distributed 263,340 pounds of food to 15,558 individuals and 7,477 nutritious meals were served to community members at the Friday Community Meal. Our Homeless Outreach program provides food, water, tents, sleeping bags etc., crisis intervention, and connects people to shelter and/or medical treatment. In the past year, our Homeless Outreach and Day Center team served 511 people including 8 children under age 18, 94 Seniors age 55+ and 16 Veterans. In total, we served 22,134 individuals in our community this past year. 85% of those served had household incomes less than 30% of Area Median Income (AMI).

Our Work



Better Lives Rhode Island is leading efforts to end homelessness and food insecurity in Rhode Island through these activities:

Direct Services - Our agency conducts street outreach in Providence County to engage with individuals who are living outdoors and connect them with shelter and services. We also provide comprehensive case management and social services through our Day Center and Pete & Andy's Place, distribute food to Providence residents through our Food Pantry, and offer hot nutritious meals and fellowship through our Community Meal program.

Advocacy - As proud members of the RI Homeless Advocacy Project and the RI Coalition to End Homelessness, we work at the community and state level to fight for policies and laws that protect the rights of homeless people.

Education and Public Awareness - Through our social media, affiliation with Street Sights, other media outlets, we strive to bring issues to the forefront, to inform, educate and encourage action. Better Lives RI has been recently featured on NBC 10's Community Spotlight, and in the Hummel Report for the work we are doing to fight hunger and homelessness.

History & Milestones



1974 – The organization began as a food pantry created by nine Providence area churches to provide bags of groceries to elderly residents living in the city's subsidized housing. The organization was aptly named the Providence In-Town Churches Association.

1979 – In response to increasing numbers of homeless people in the downtown area, a soup kitchen was started by a group of volunteers at the United Methodist Church.

1985 – Providence In-Town Churches Association (PICA) was incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a Board of Directors from member churches. Part-time staff was hired, and both the food pantry and community meal programs operated out of the United Methodist Church at 134 Matthewson Street.

1990's – Social Service programs geared towards the elderly were offered at subsidized housing developments in the City and at the YMCA on Broad Street.

2004 – A homeless man named Ronald Watts began distributing clothing and toiletries to people living on the streets on a voluntary basis. He was later hired as the first Outreach Worker and from lived experience created a client-centered, holistic, walk-in case management program.

2006 – The agency moved its operations to the First Universalist Church and the Board embarked on a three- year capacity building plan with New Roots.

2010 – The SOAR (SSI/SSDI Outreach and Access to Recovery) program was added to provide a streamlined benefits application process for those without income and unable to work. The agency relocated to 15 Hayes Street.

2018 – Since the agency was no longer solely a faith-based organization, PICA's Board of Directors decided a name change was in order. Better Lives Rhode Island was born with the ministries of PICA as the cornerstone of its work.

2020 – The COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a standstill. Except for a two-week period, Better Lives Rhode Island remained open to provide groceries from our pantry shelves, to deliver bagged meals to homeless shelters, and encampments, and to provide resources and support to those staying on the streets.

2021 – Change in agency leadership. After 18 years at the helm, Diana Burdett retired and Paula Hudson, who had been a case manager with the agency since 2019, became the new Executive Director.

2024 – Celebrating its 50th year in service to the Providence Community, Better Lives Rhode Island has grown and prospered. The agency now employs nine dedicated full-time staff and has a budget of close to one million dollars.

2025 – In June 2025 we opened Pete & Andy's Place, a transitional housing program for incarcerated women being released from the Adult Correctional Institution (ACI) to homelessness. 11 women have been enrolled in the program to date.

2026 and beyond – Future plans are bright and include The Board and agency leadership are in the process of developing a 5-year strategic plan and a succession plan for transition of leadership.

By The Numbers FY 2025



Issue	Action	Results
1 in 3 Rhode Islanders are food insecure (they don't have enough food to eat) *per RI Community Food Bank 2025 Status Report	BLRI Food Pantry distributed 263,340 pounds of food to low-income residents of Providence.	6376 low-income households received food for their families 977 of which were first-time visitors to our pantry.
2373 persons were experiencing homelessness in RI (a 53% increase since 2020) *per RI Coalition to End Homelessness annual Point in Time Count on Jan 21, 2025	BLRI Street Outreach and Day Center Programs assisted 511 people who were either unsheltered (in vehicles, abandoned buildings, in tent encampments and on the streets) or in danger of losing their housing.	97 people were connected with emergency shelters and another 14 with substance use treatment programs and/or counseling 85 exited our programs to positive housing destinations Secured permanent housing for 21 households
People without housing don't have the means to cook and often lack nutrition	BLRI's Community Meal program is open to anyone who walks through our doors – no questions asked	7477 nutritious meals were served

Financial Snapshot (July 2024 – June 2025)

