

EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

One City Center

Thursday, August 17, 2023
8:30 AM

AGENDA

1. **Introductions**
 - a. Review and approval of minutes.
2. **Monthly Shelter Bed Usage Statistics**
 - a. July Statistics
3. **Encampment Update**
4. **Region 1 Update**
5. **Hub 2 Update**
6. **Expo Closure**
7. **Winter Planning**
8. **Federal, State and Local Legislation**
 - a. Bill Tracking
9. **Other Business**

Next Meeting

September 21, 2023

Time: 8:30 -10:00

Location: One City Center

If you should have any questions, please contact:

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Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Meeting Summary

Due to a scheduling conflict with MaineHousing, key stakeholders for the listening session/encampment discussion (the Social Services Director, the HUB 2 Coordinator, and the PATH Senior Director) were unable to attend as they were in the initial meeting of the Encampment Crisis Response Team's Performance & Data Management team. It was questioned if the meeting should have been postponed due to their absence. The City Council approved an emergency shelter at 166 Riverside Street for single asylum seekers which should open up capacity at the HSC for people in encampments to come into shelter. HVJ will host its Longest Day of Homelessness Summer Solstice Vigil on Wednesday, June 21, from 10am-3pm at Tommy's Park in Portland.

Introductions

- Scheduling conflict with ECRT' data team: MaineHousing was only able to meet during our meeting time, causing several people to miss the ESAC meeting.
 - What is the point of meeting if the people involved with helping the unhoused in encampments as party of the ECRT are not here?
 - Should this meeting have been cancelled or postponed?
- Approval of May 18, 2023 Meeting Minutes
 - The minutes were approved with none opposed.

May, 2023 Statistics

- The Expo was at capacity the entire month, with an average of 300 people sheltered each night.
- Intakes are trending down with 86 in May, compared to 96 last month.
- CTOs remained low with none issued at the HSC this month.
- The high bed night count was shared by three nights at the start and end of the month: May 3, 4, and 29 had 468 individual in shelters (excluding EXPO).

City Council Meeting and Listening Session

- City Council approved an emergency shelter at 166 Riverside Street.
- Single asylum seekers.
 - The Blueberry Road proposal for asylum seeking families did not move forward; this shelter will be for singles, not families.
- Will create capacity at the HSC for unsheltered.
 - ~70-80% of the people staying at the HSC are asylum seekers.
- To open around November.
- We want to avoid pitting vulnerable groups against each other.
- Public support for the unhoused.
 - How can we humanize people sleeping outside to their housed neighbors?

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

- Some type of media campaign with testimonials/people sharing their stories.

Hotel Closure Update

- South Portland hotels are set to close in 2 weeks.
- Sanford hotel closing and clients evicted Friday.

Cumberland County Service Hub Update

- HUB 2 Coordinator is meeting with the ECRT to work on a by name list (BNL) of people in the encampment.
 - This will feed into the HUB 2 BNL.
- Other HUBs are piloting Coordinated Entry.

Federal, State, and Local Legislation Update

- Federal
 - Congress passed and President Joe Biden signed into law the “Fiscal Responsibility Act,” an agreement to lift the federal debt ceiling until 2025 in exchange for capping federal spending programs at FY 23 levels in FY 24 and allowing an only 1% increase in spending in FY25.
- State
 - Signed by the governor:
 - An Act Making Certain Appropriations and Allocations and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government.
 - An Act to Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to Aid Residents with High Heating Costs and to Finalize the COVID Pandemic Relief Payment Program.
 - Short-Term Housing Support: \$21 million to bolster the Emergency Housing Relief Fund created by Governor Mills and the Legislature earlier this year that supports emergency housing and emergency shelters to prevent people from experiencing homelessness this winter.

Other items, updates, and announcements

- HVJ Longest Day of Homelessness Summer Solstice Vigil
 - Wednesday, June 21, from 10am-3pm.
 - At Tommy’s Park in Portland.
 - 12pm, HVJ members and allies will speak about their experiences with homelessness and the work they have been doing to address homelessness.

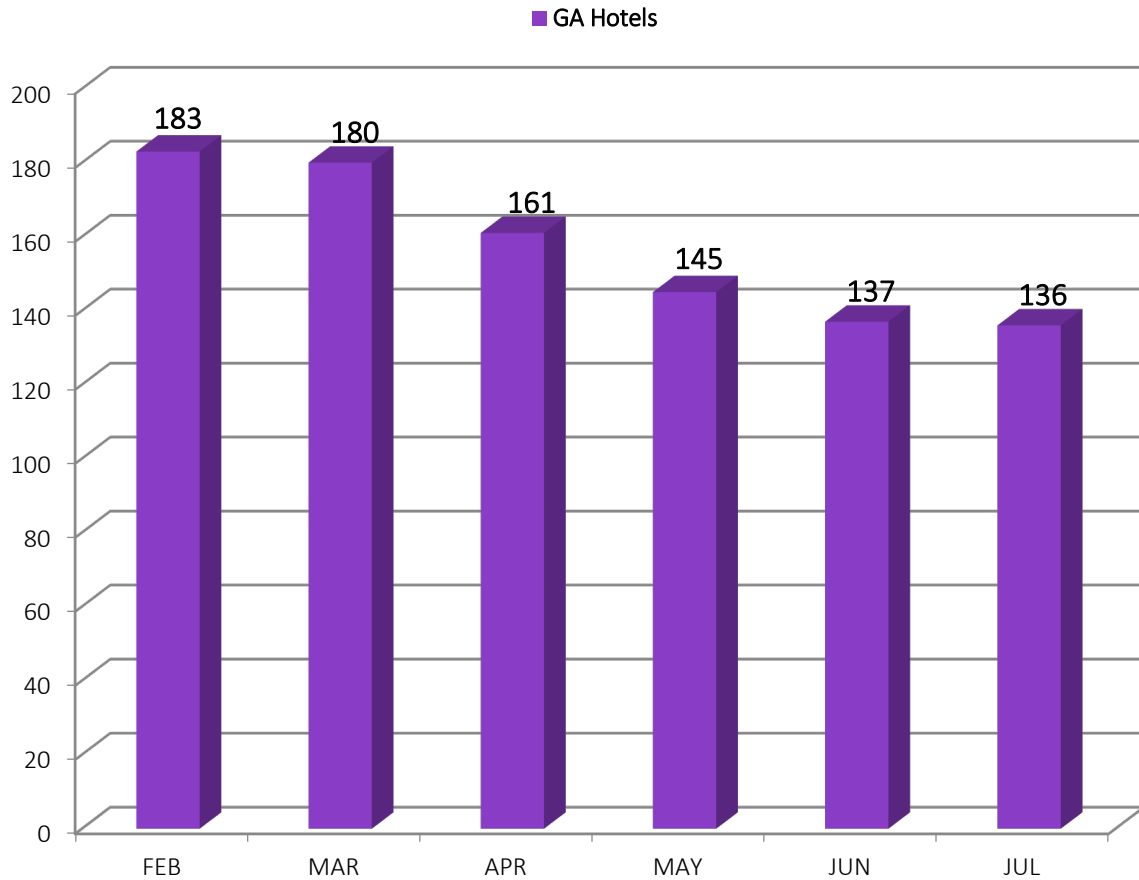
PORTLAND HOMELESS SHELTERS

Average Total Number of Individuals Residing in Shelters* per Night:

	JULY 2022	JULY 2023
ADOLESCENTS	24 Individuals	24 Individuals
FAMILIES	80 Individuals 32 Average Families	116 Individuals 41 Average Families
ADULTS	317 Individuals	488 Individuals
Total	421 Individuals	628 Individuals

*GA hotels are on the next slide.

PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE JULY, 2023 General Assistance Hotels



***Started referral partnership with South Portland Schools in December, 2020.**

	Month*	Total
Unduplicated GA Hotels	136	3,200

Total Unduplicated GA Hotels are the cases granted General Assistance hotel rooms from June, 2020 through the end of the month being reported.

Portland GA no longer makes McKinney Vento referrals as of the May 5, 2022 policy change.

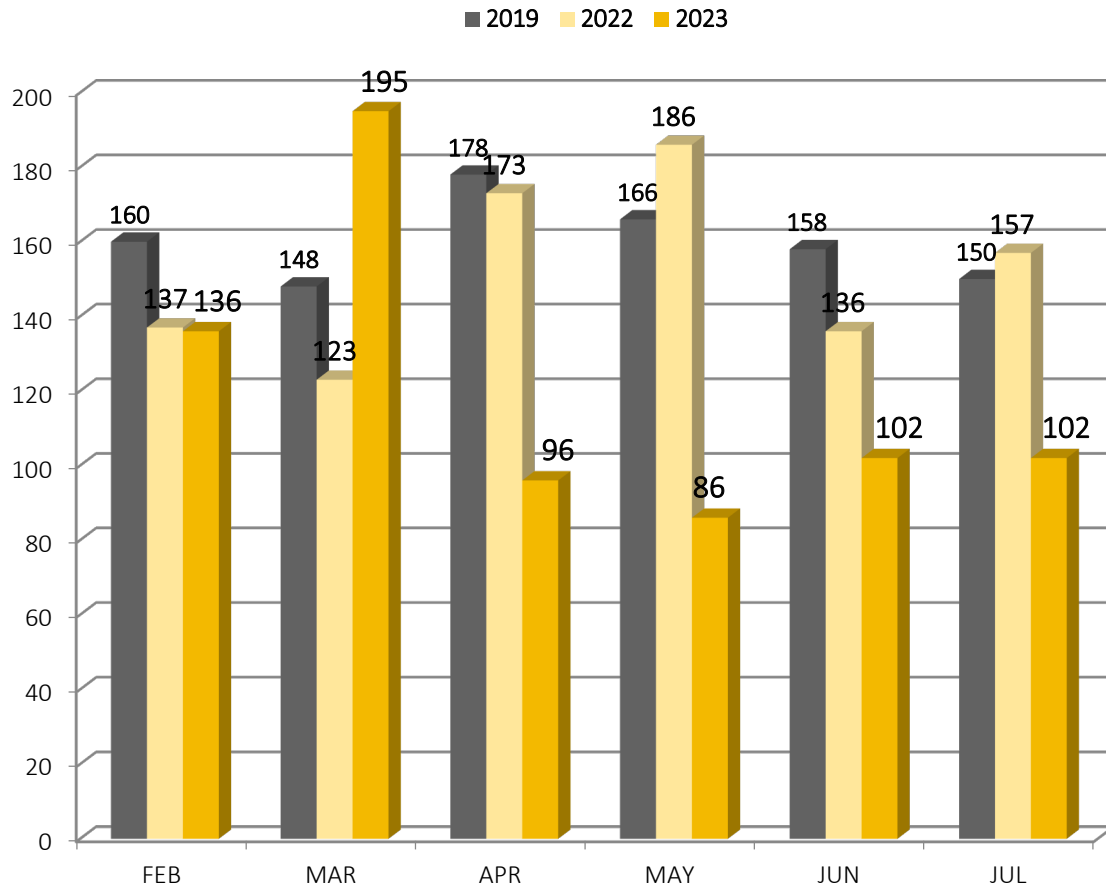
HOMELESS SERVICES CENTER

JULY, 2023

Intakes by Residency

MAINE TOWN					OUT-OF-STATE					OUT-OF-COUNTRY			
Augusta	1				AZ	4							
Bangor	1				CA	4							
Buxton	1				CT	1							
Hollis	1				MA	1							
Kittery	1				NV	1							
Lewiston	3				NY	1							
Old Orchard Beach	1				TX	2							
South Portland	5												

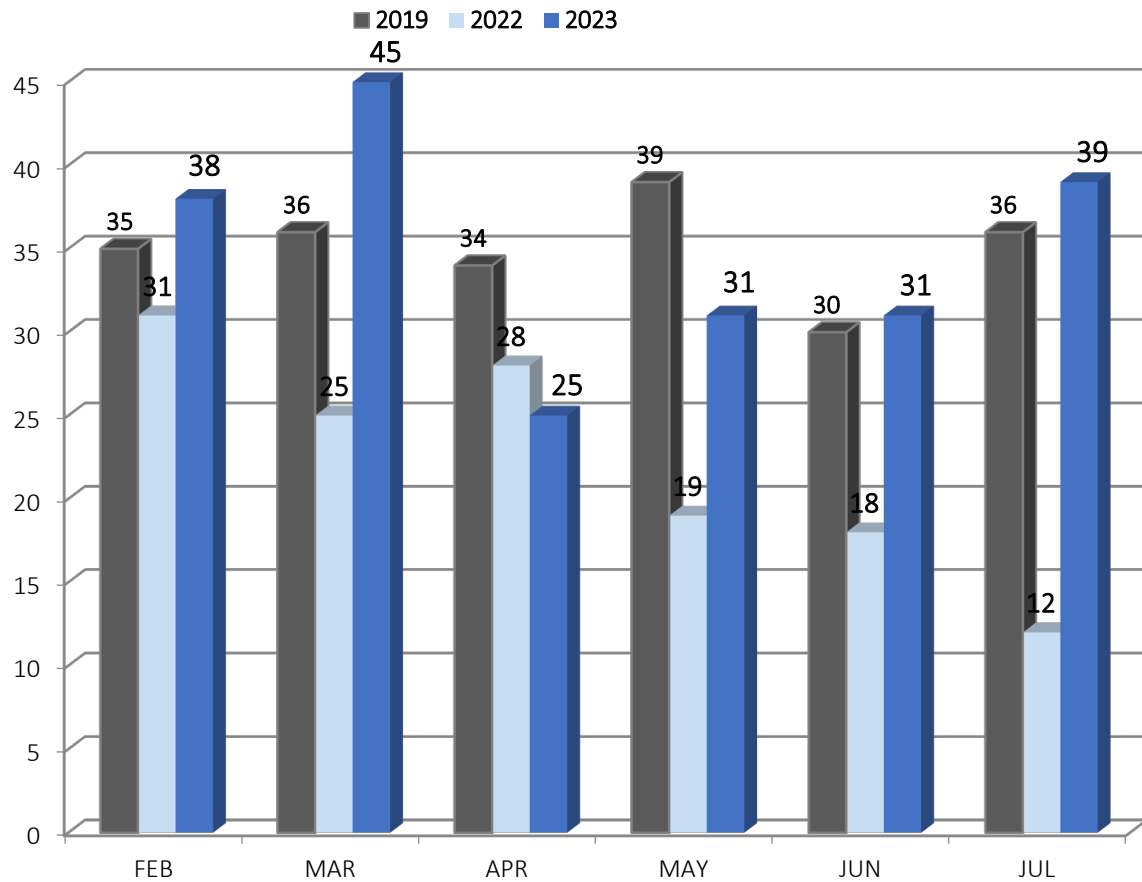
PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE JULY, 2023 SHELTER INTAKES BY MONTH



*NOTE: this and the next two slides compare the current year, last year, and the last year before the pandemic.

	INTAKES	Pre-COVID Bed Capacity	Current Bed Capacity
Through These Doors	11 / 20	16	16+ at shelter and hotel overflow
Family Shelter	3 / 16	146	146
Joe Kreisler	7	24	24
Milestone	13	41	34
HSC (Men)	32	154 at OSS, 75 at PSRC overflow	208
HSC(Women)	16		
Florence House	14	25 at Shelter, 15 at Safe Haven	25 at Shelter, 15 at Safe Haven
Elena's Way	6	NA	40
TOTAL	102	496	474+

PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE JULY, 2023 HOUSING PLACEMENTS BY MONTH



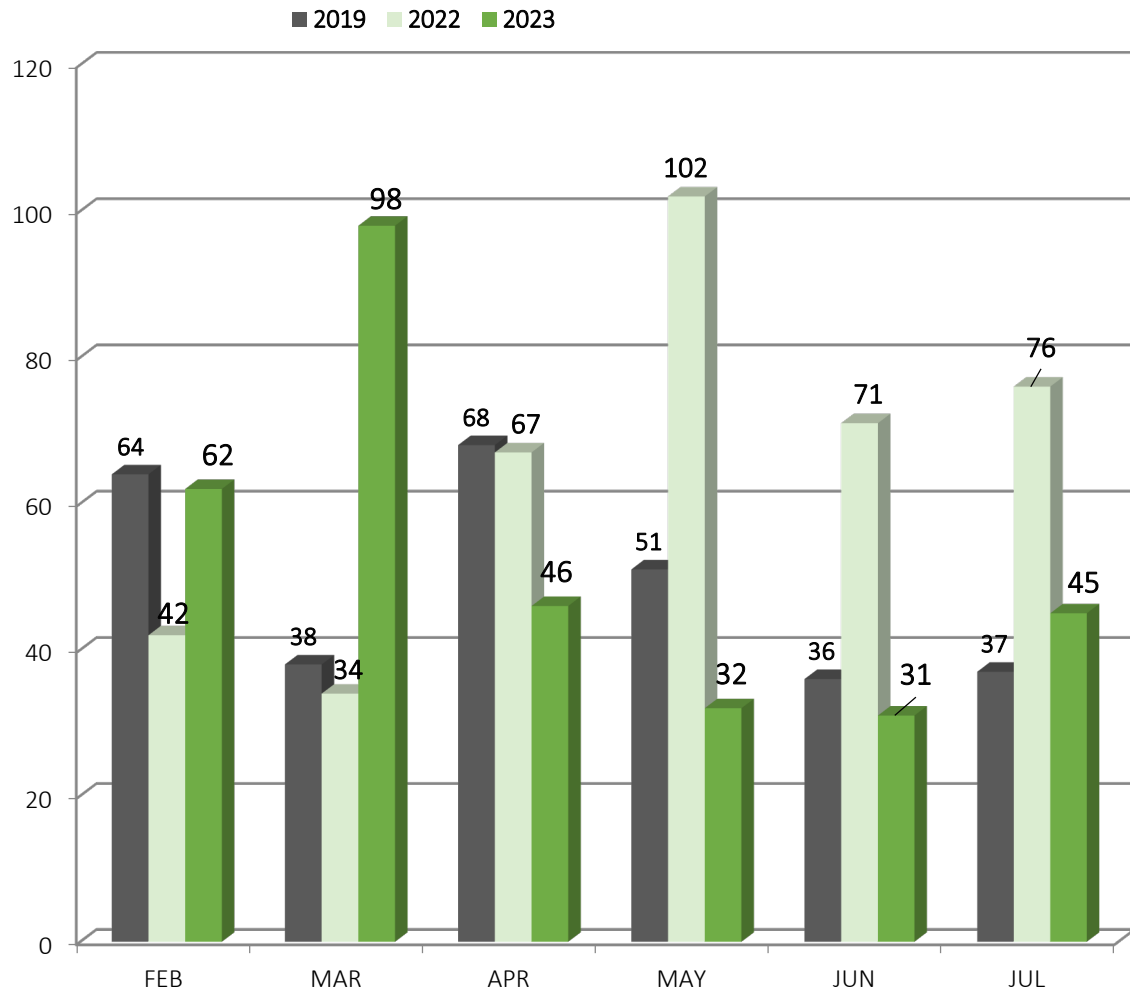
***Starting October, 2013, Oxford Street Shelter (HSC) shifted prioritization of housing placements to their 30 longest-term stayers.**

	TOTAL HOUSING PLACEMENTS	BED NIGHTS	TEMPORARY	PERMANENT
Through These Doors	9 / 14	300		9/14
Family Shelter	4 / 17	602		3/15
Joe Kreisler	4	304	2	2
Milestone	4	1,031		4
HSC (Men)	12	3,941		12
HSC (Women)	3	525		3
Florence House	1	125		1
Elena's Way	2	342		2
TOTAL	39	7,170	2	37

PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE

JULY, 2023

1st TIME HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS (BASED ON SELF-REPORTING)

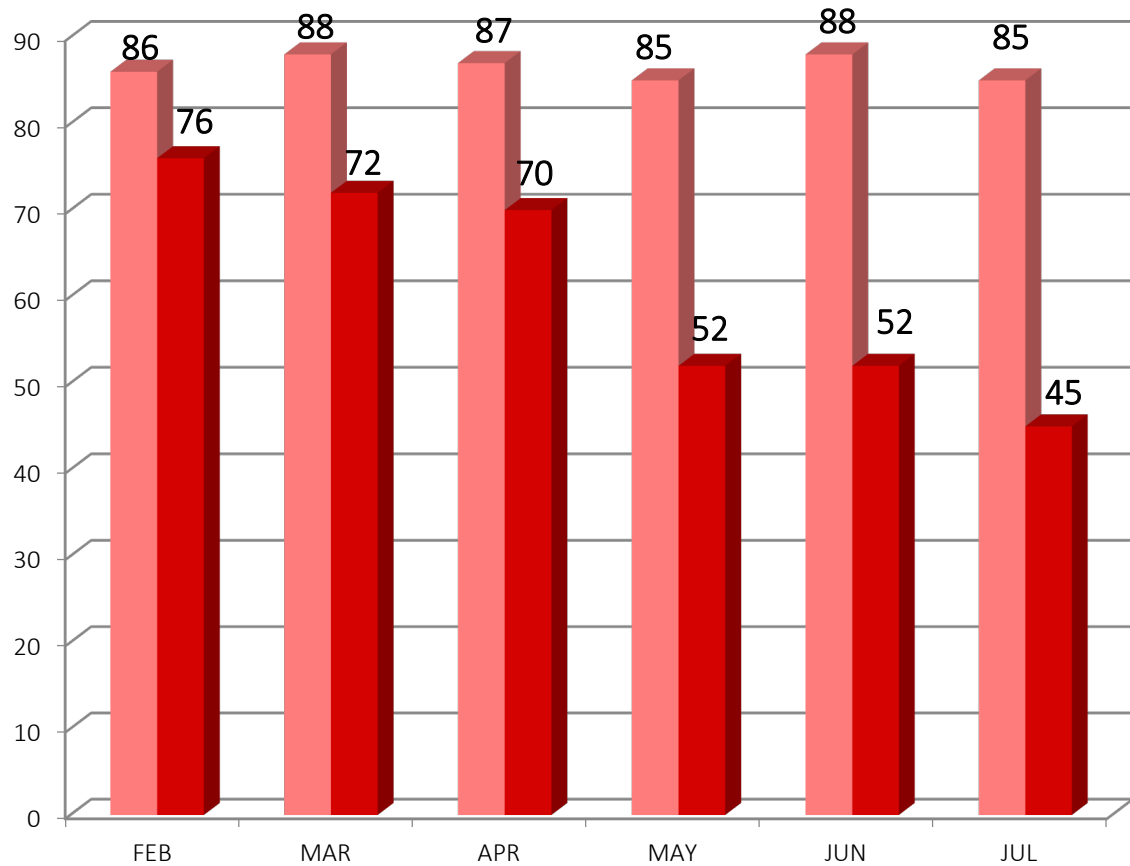


1 ST TIME HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS	All Intakes	1 st Time Homeless Intakes	% of the Shelter's Intakes	% of All Intake	% of Portland First Time Homeless Intakes
Through These Doors	11 / 20	0			
Family Shelter	3 / 16	3 / 16	100%	16%	7%
Joe Kreisler	7	4	57%	4%	9%
Milestone	13	11	85%	11%	24%
HSC (Men)	32	20	63%	20%	44%
HSC (Women)	16	7	44%	7%	16%
Florence House	14	0			
Elena's Way	6	0			
TOTAL	102	45		44%	100%

PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE JULY, 2023 CTOs FROM SHELTER

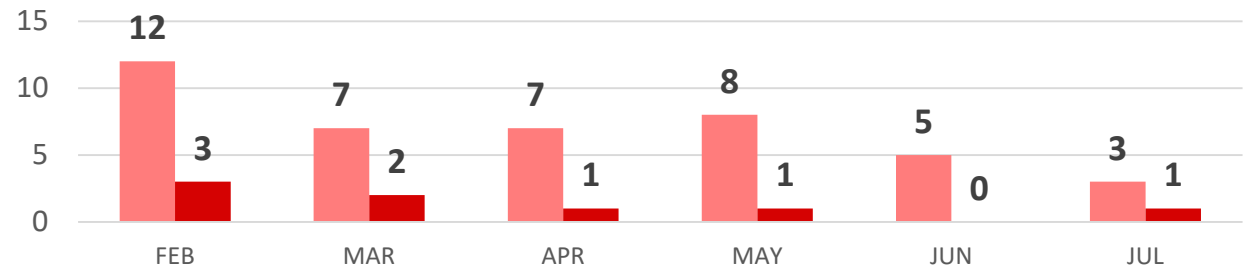
Total Current CTOs

2022 2023



CTO STATISTICS	CTOs in the Month	Medical Restrictions in Month	Current CTOs
Family Shelter	0		0
Joe Kreisler	0		3
Milestone	0		10
HSC	1		31
Florence House	0		0
Elena's Way	0		1
TOTAL	1		45

CTOs Issued in the Month



PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE JULY, 2023 HOUSING PLACEMENTS BY TYPE

	S+C	BRAP	Recovery Home	Housing Project	STEP	Family Reunification	Sect. 8/HCV	OTHER*	GA	No Subsidy
Through These Doors					2	2		4		1
Family Shelter									2	1
Joe Kreisler						2		2		
Milestone				2			2			
HSC (Men)				8		1	1		2	
HSC (Women)				1					2	
Florence House								1		
Elena's Way								2		
TOTAL				11	2	6	3	9	6	2

*RRH, Host home, YMCA

Distribution of Placements in the Month: 39



2023 Placements: 246

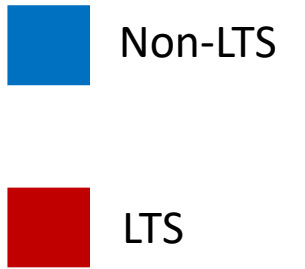


PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE JULY, 2023 SHELTER COUNT BY NIGHT

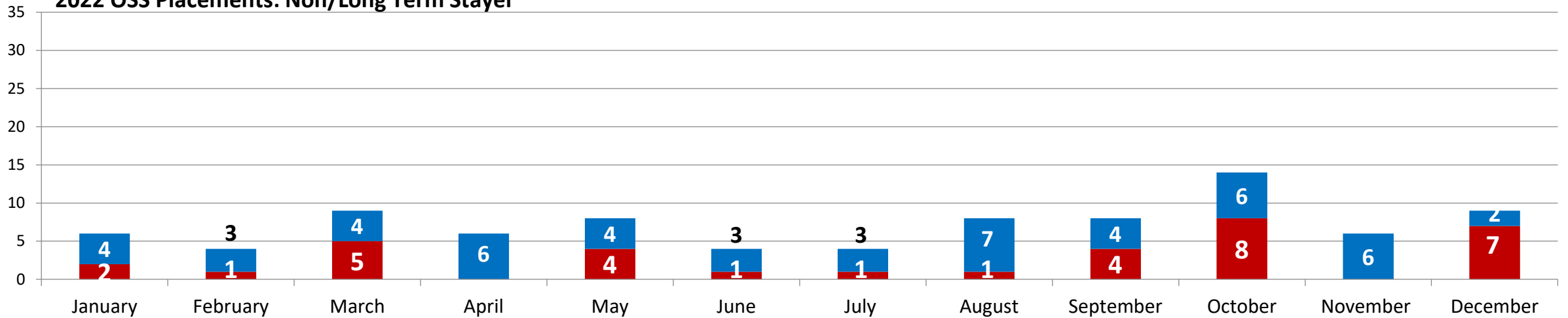
On JULY: 7
641 individuals
(including families)
were utilizing shelter services in
Portland

Calendar Day	Through These Doors	Family Shelter	Florence House	Joe Kreisler	Milestone	HSC Beds	FS WC	Elena's Way	Total Bed Nights
1	16	96	208	23	31	208	0	40	622
2	16	96	204	23	36	204	0	39	618
3	16	96	206	24	33	206	0	39	620
4	18	96	208	25	36	208	0	38	629
5	17	96	209	23	34	209	0	39	627
6	21	96	208	25	34	208	0	38	630
7	21	96	212	26	34	212	0	40	641
8	17	96	209	24	38	209	0	40	633
9	14	103	208	25	34	208	0	40	632
10	14	103	210	24	40	210	0	39	640
11	17	103	209	23	35	209	0	39	635
12	17	103	209	24	37	209	0	39	638
13	22	92	209	25	35	209	0	39	631
14	22	92	208	23	38	208	0	39	630
15	21	92	207	20	36	207	0	39	622
16	21	92	208	23	36	208	0	39	627
17	21	92	208	24	33	208	0	39	625
18	19	101	210	24	33	210	0	39	636
19	18	101	210	26	35	210	0	39	639
20	23	101	208	24	33	208	0	38	635
21	18	101	209	24	31	209	0	37	629
22	18	101	206	20	25	206	0	37	613
23	18	101	208	19	31	208	0	36	621
24	18	101	209	24	29	209	0	36	626
25	18	101	209	25	26	209	0	35	623
26	18	95	208	24	34	208	0	35	622
27	17	95	209	24	36	209	0	35	625
28	18	97	208	25	32	208	0	35	623
29	18	97	209	23	34	209	0	34	624
30	17	97	209	22	34	209	0	34	622
31	17	97	211	27	34	211	0	34	631
Total	566	3,026	6,463	735	1,047	6,463	0	1,169	19,469
Avg/night	18	98	208	24	34	208	0	38	628
Highest	23	103	212	27	40	212	0	40	641
Lowest	14	92	204	19	25	204	0	34	613

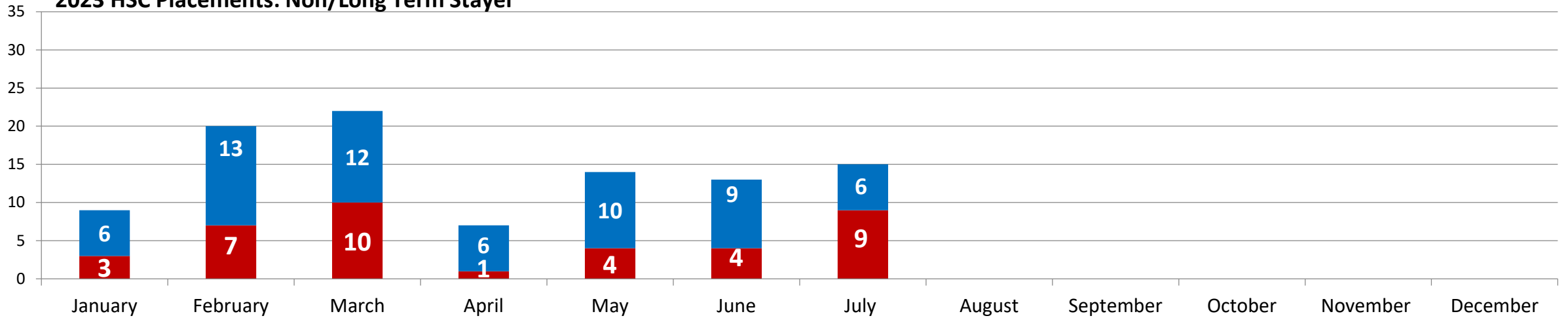
HOMELESS SERVICES CENTER & COMMUNITY OVERFLOW HOUSING PLACEMENT DATA



2022 OSS Placements: Non/Long Term Stayer

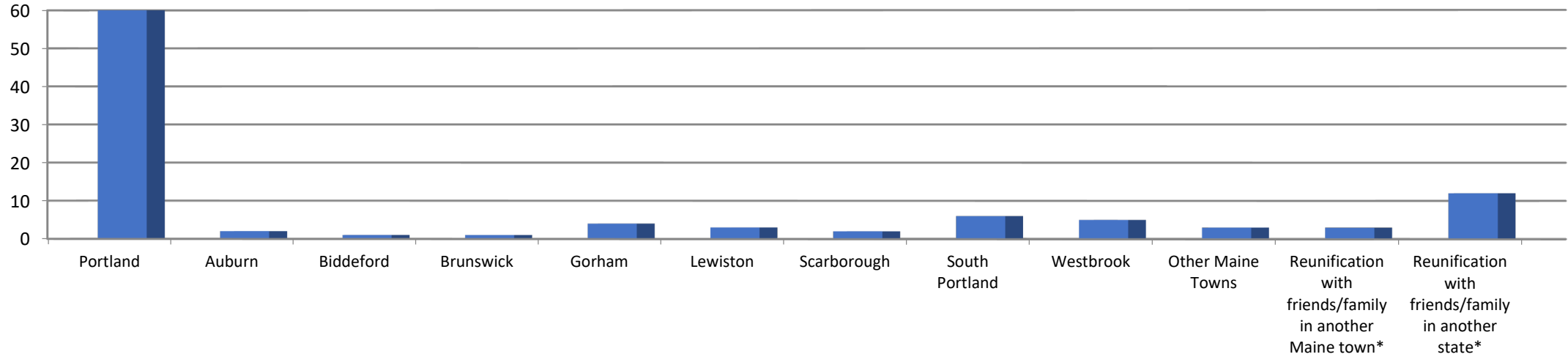


2023 HSC Placements: Non/Long Term Stayer



The 9 LTS placements had a cumulative 4,364 bed nights.

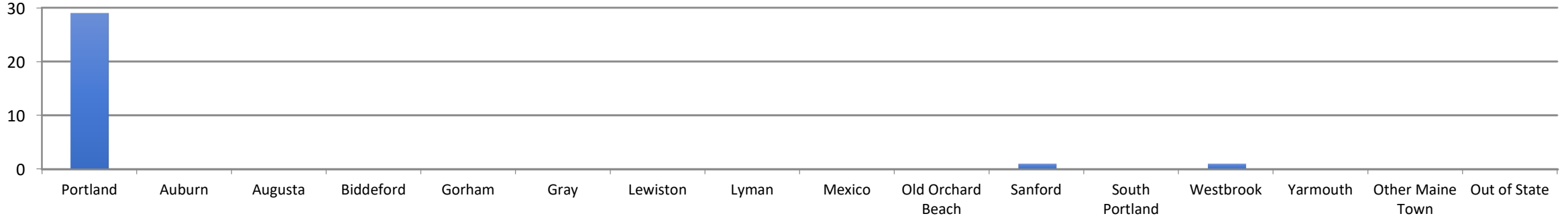
HOMELESS SERVICES CENTER PERMANENT AND TRANSITIONAL 2023 HOUSING PLACEMENT DATA



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	%
TOTAL HOUSING PLACEMENTS	10	20	22	8	14	13	15						102	100%
Portland	6	7	17	3	6	10	11						60	58.8%
Auburn	1	1											2	2.0%
Biddeford			1										1	1.0%
Brunswick	1												1	1.0%
Gorham					4								4	3.9%
Lewiston		1			1		1						3	2.9%
Sanford		2											2	2.0%
South Portland	1	2	2				1						6	5.9%
Westbrook		5	1										5	4.9%
Other Maine Towns	1	1				1							3	2.9%
Reunification with friends/family in another Maine town*			1			1	1						3	2.9%
Reunification with friends/family in another state*		1	1	5	1	1	1						12	11.8%

FAMILY SHELTER PERMANENT AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PLACEMENT DATA

■ 2023



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	100%
TOTAL HOUSING PLACEMENTS	4	4	8	4	3	5	3						31	
Portland	4	3	7	4	3	5	3						29	93.5%
Auburn														0.0%
Augusta														0.0%
Biddeford														0.0%
Gorham														0.0%
Gray														0.0%
Lewiston														0.0%
Lyman														0.0%
Mexico														0.0%
Old Orchard Beach														0.0%
Sanford		1											1	3.2%
South Portland														0.0%
Westbrook			1										1	3.2%
Yarmouth														0.0%
Other Maine Town														0.0%
Out of State														0.0%

USEFUL LINKS

- Maine Legislature Homepage: <http://legislature.maine.gov/>
- Sign up to Testify and/or submit testimony here: <https://www.mainelegislature.org/testimony/>

Common Acronyms: AFA = Appropriations and Financial Affairs. HHS = Health and Human Services. OTP = Ought to Pass. OTP-AM = Ought to Pass as Amended. ONTP = Ought Not to Pass.

Color code: Orange font = Budget bill; Black font = Homelessness related bill; Blue font = Service related; Green font = Housing/Rental Assistance related; Purple font = General Assistance & Safety Net related bills; Pink font = Food security related bills; highlighted in yellow = passed the House and/or Senate; highlighted in green = signed by the Governor and will become Public Law; Red text = the bill is now dead.

BUDGET BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 258	Governor's Bill	Governor's Biennial Budget	<p>signed by the Governor</p> <p>Click here for the bill as enacted as Chaptered Law.</p>	<p>As Amended (removes emergency preamble):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PART TT: This Part requires the transfer of \$5,000,000 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Maine State Housing Authority, Housing Authority - State program, Other Special Revenue Funds account. This Part also requires the State Controller, as the 5th priority transfer at the close of fiscal year 2022-23 only, after all transfers are made pursuant to statute, to transfer from the available balance of the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund up to \$65,000,000 to the Maine State Housing Authority, Housing Authority - State program, Other Special Revenue Funds account. This Part also requires that up to \$35,000,000 of the funds transferred under this Part must be used to fund the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program and the remainder must be used to fund the Low-income Housing Tax Credit Program. • PART AAAA: This Part establishes the Housing First Program within the Department of Health and Human Services to facilitate the delivery of stabilization and support services to residents of properties established or developed to provide permanent housing to persons who have been experiencing chronic homelessness and to fund technical assistance, administered by the Maine State Housing Authority, for the development of housing consistent with the program. The Part requires the department to ensure that funding supplements existing and future services provided under associated programs such as the MaineCare program and the housing outreach and member engagement provider program. The program is funded from the real estate transfer tax by depositing 1/2 of the funds that would otherwise be deposited into the General Fund into the Housing First Fund created by this Part. The Part authorizes 2 positions within the Department of Health and Human Services under the Housing First Fund. The Part directs the Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine State Housing Authority to jointly adopt rules to administer the program and requires them to report annually to the joint standing

				<p><i>committee or joint select committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the program. The Part also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to apply to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for state plan amendments to align certain MaineCare rules with the Housing First Program.. <u>See Budget Language Attachment for more information.</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PART EEEE: Statewide Hunger Relief Program. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, on or before June 30, 2023, the State Controller shall transfer \$2,000,000 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Statewide Hunger Relief Program, Other Special Revenue Funds account to provide funds for a grant for capital support to a Portland-based food security hub with partnerships or capacity for statewide distribution to enable increased production of hot meals each day for homeless, sheltered or food insecure persons. • PART KKKK: Department of Education to develop pilot program. The Department of Education's office of school and student supports shall establish a 2-year pilot program to help students avoid homelessness. As soon as funds are available for the pilot program, the department shall provide McKinney-Vento liaisons access to emergency financial assistance for the families of students in an amount up to \$750 per student. Emergency assistance may be provided for services authorized for funding under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act in addition to assistance for other housing-related needs such as rental assistance, utilities and critical home repairs and other assistance that will help a student avoid homelessness. • PART RRRR: <i>Supporting Emergency Shelters to Address Homelessness:</i> \$12,000,000 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Maine State Housing Authority, Emergency Housing Relief Fund Program, Other Special Revenue Funds account to provide funds for short-term emergency housing, legal services and other wraparound settlement supports intended to support individuals in becoming established in a community or in the workforce. (One-time funding)
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HOMELESSNESS BILLS


Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 1422	Rep. Michael Brennan	An Act to End Homelessness and Assist Students Who Are Homeless by Establishing a Housing Voucher Program and Providing Site-based Housing Services	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be	This bill establishes a housing voucher program for homeless students under the authority of the Maine State Housing Authority and appropriates one-time funding of \$2 million in fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25. The bill directs the Maine State Housing Authority to identify

			Enacted – CARRIED OVER	3 sites in Maine to be used for a site-based housing program and appropriates one-time funding of \$3.5 million in fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25 to the Department of Health and Human Services to support the program.
LD 1844	Rep. Poppy Arford	An Act to Support Emergency Housing Facility Construction, Renovation and Acquisition Statewide by Creating a Matching Grant Program	Signed by the Governor	This bill establishes the Emergency Housing Matching Grant Program to award grants at \$10,000 per emergency housing bed up to \$1,000,000 per recipient to program providers to construct, renovate or acquire new or existing buildings to house emergency housing or shelter programs, including emergency housing 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and housing navigation and case management services in the building after occupancy. Recipients must match the grants on a one-to-one basis from a source other than state funding. The bill also includes an appropriations and allocations section. – total amount each year for the Program is \$10,000,500

SERVICE BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 1050	Sen. Eric Brakey	An Act to Request a Federal Waiver for Presumptive Work Eligibility for Asylum Seekers	Signed by the Governor	This resolve directs the Commissioner of Labor to request a waiver from the US Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship and Immigration Services to allow an asylum seeker who has applied for asylum and has not been denied, eligibility to work in the State for the 6-month period immediately after applying for asylum while awaiting a final determination and for the time period while an asylum seeker's work permit has expired and is pending renewal.
LD 1781	Rep. Drew Gattine	An Act to Establish Permanent Funding for the Homeless Substance Use Disorder Program	Signed by the Governor	This bill establishes the Homeless Substance Use Disorder Service Program to provide rapid access to low-barrier treatment for substance use disorder and stable housing to support recovery. The program is similar to the homeless opioid users service engagement pilot project established in Resolve 2019, chapter 105, but the program is not limited to opioid use and provides additional services including transportation, community services and inpatient treatment services. The evaluation of the pilot project must be used to inform the rules implementing the program and the contractors and subcontractors of the pilot project must be included in developing the rules.

HOUSING/RENTAL ASSISTANCE BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
 LD 2	Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross	An Act to Address Maine's Housing Crisis	In the possession of the Senate when the Legislature Adjourned – this bill is now dead – but included in the Budget	Included in the Budget Change Package. This bill has been amended: This bill establishes the Housing First Program within the Department of Health and Human Services to facilitate the delivery of stabilization and support services to residents of properties established or developed to provide permanent housing to persons who have been chronically homeless and to fund technical assistance, administered by the Maine State Housing

				Authority, for the development of housing consistent with the program. The bill requires the department to ensure that fund supplements existing and future services provided under programs like MaineCare and the Housing Outreach and Member Engagement Program is funded from the real estate transfer tax by depositing half of the funds that would otherwise be deposited into the General Fund into the Housing First Fund created by the bill. The bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine State Housing Authority to jointly adopt rules to administer the program and requires them to report annually to the Joint Standing or Joint Select Committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the program. The bill also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to apply to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to align certain federal programs with the Housing First model.
★	LD 1074	Sen. Matthea Daughtry	An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund New Affordable Housing for Low-Income Households	Public Hearing on 4/25 - AFA Committee – Carried Over \$100,000,000 bond issue to build new affordable housing for low-income households.
★	LD 654	Sen. Matthew Pouliot	Resolve, Directing the Finance Authority of Maine to Establish a Pilot Program to Encourage the Development of Affordable Accessory Dwelling Units	Signed by the Governor This resolve directs the Finance Authority of Maine to establish a 2-year pilot program to encourage the development of accessory dwelling units in the State. The program must buy down interest rates to levels below market rates for up to 100 community bank loans for accessory dwelling units until the program ends.
★	LD 1706	Rep. Marc Malon	An Act to Clarify Statewide Laws Regarding Affordable Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units	Signed by the Governor This bill makes changes to provisions of law regarding affordable housing and accessory dwelling units by: 1. Removing from the definition of "affordable housing development" that the developer designates the development as affordable; 2. Clarifying that municipal approval of an affordable housing development for purposes of timing of the execution of a restrictive covenant means granting final approval, including issuing an occupancy permit; 3. Clarifying that setback requirements are just one type of dimensional requirements; 4. Changing language stating where housing is allowed or permitted to refer to where residential uses, including as a conditional use, are allowed or permitted; 5. Allowing accessory dwelling units on nonconforming lots, including in shoreland zones, if the accessory dwelling units do not further increase the nonconformity; 6. Allowing accessory dwelling units built without municipal approval, including accessory dwelling units in shoreland zones, if the accessory dwelling units otherwise meet state and municipal requirements for accessory dwelling units; and 7. Allowing municipalities to approve accessory dwelling units through a permitting process that does not require planning board approval.



LD 226	Rep. Rebecca Millett	An Act to Address Maine’s Affordable Housing Crisis	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill provides one-time funds to MaineHousing in the amount of \$100,000,000 in fiscal year 2023-24 and in fiscal year 2024-25 (only these FYs) to increase affordable housing stock in the State.
LD 724	Sen. Cameron Reny	An Act to Expand Workforce Housing in Rural Maine by Funding the Maine State Housing Authority's Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program	Signed by the Governor	This bill provides one-time funds in the amount of \$10M each years in fiscal year 2023-24 and fiscal year 2024-25 only to the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program within the Maine State Housing Authority for the development of smaller affordable rental housing projects.
LD 1540	Rep. Rebecca Millett	An Act to Create the Stable Home Fund Program	Emergency bill requiring 2/3's majority vote – failed 2/3's majority vote in the House but Passed in the Senate to be Placed on the Special Appropriations Table on 6/21. Sent back to the House for concurrence where it failed 2/3's needed for final passage – Carried over	This bill, which includes an emergency preamble and emergency clause, creates the Stable Home Fund and the Stable Home Fund Program within MaineHousing. The purpose of the program is to provide persons earning up to 60% of the median income for an area as defined by HUD with \$300 per month in rental assistance paid directly to the landlord for up to 24 months or until those persons secure housing by means of a housing voucher program administered by HUD under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, or secure a subsidized housing unit. The bill directs MaineHousing to administer the program except that MaineHousing may delegate the administration of the program and provide appropriate funding from the fund to a municipal housing authority with respect to eligible persons located within the municipal housing authority's jurisdiction.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE & SAFETY NET BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 1426	Rep. Kristi Mathieson	An Act to Secure Housing for the Most Vulnerable Maine Residents by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal General Assistance	HHS Committee – Tabled at 5/22 Work Session – Carried over	<p>This bill:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Requires an overseer, no later than the 120th day following appointment or election, to complete training on the requirements of the municipal general assistance program; Replaces, for determining the maximum level of assistance, the fair market value determination with setting the assistance at the equivalent amount of rental assistance provided for tenant-based housing choice vouchers under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 except that the benefit level may not be less than the difference between the applicant's income and 110% of the area's fair market rent; Provides that if general assistance is being used to pay rent for an applicant whose rent is subject to a lease an overseer may redetermine the applicant's eligibility annually; Increases from 70% to 90% the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by a municipality and each Indian tribe; Directs the Department of Health and Human Services to reimburse each municipality for 5% of the direct costs of paying benefits incurred through its general assistance program;

				<p>6. Directs the Department of Health and Human Services to establish and provide overseers with access to a statewide database for tracking applicants for the general assistance program and expenses relating to the program; and</p> <p>7. Requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide assistance to municipalities with regard to processing applications for the general assistance program and directs the department to establish a hotline that is available 24 hours per day in order to provide consistent, accurate advice to overseers. It also requires the department to respond to requests for assistance within 24 hours</p>
LD 1664	Sen. Marianne Moore	An Act to Increase Reimbursement Under the General Assistance Program	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill increases, from 70% to 90%, the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by each municipality and Indian tribe.
LD 1675	Rep. Michael Brennan	An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the General Assistance Program Regarding Eligibility, Housing Assistance and State Reimbursement and to Establish a Working Group	HHS Committee – Tabled at 5/22 Work Session – Carried over	This bill amends the law governing the General Assistance (GA) program to provide that a municipality must calculate housing assistance equivalent to the amount of rental assistance provided for tenant-based housing choice vouchers under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937. The bill extends the period of eligibility from one month to 6 months. Beginning July 1, 2023, when a municipality incurs net general assistance costs in excess of 0.008% of that municipality's most recent state valuation relative to the state fiscal year for which reimbursement is being issued, DHHS must reimburse the municipality for 90% of the amount in excess of these expenditures. The bill also directs the department to establish a working group to study and make recommendations related to a uniform intake process and the conversion of the GA program into a housing assistance program.
LD 1732	Rep. Michele Meyer	An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program	HHS Committee – Tabled at 5/22 Work Session – Carried over	<p>This bill changes the municipal general assistance program in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It requires overseers and designated or appointed municipal officials administering the program to complete training within 120 days of election or appointment; 2. It requires municipalities to accept applications for general assistance during regular business hours; 3. It amends provisions governing the municipality of responsibility to increase the provision of assistance from 30 days to 6 months when a municipality assists an applicant in relocating to another community and from 6 months to 12 months when an applicant is residing in a group home, shelter, rehabilitation center, nursing home or hospital or in a hotel, motel or other temporary housing; 4. It increases, from 70% to 90%, the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by each municipality and Indian tribe. It also provides that, if a municipality elects to determine need without consideration of funds from a municipally controlled

				trust, the State is required to reimburse the municipality for 66 2/3% of the amount in excess of expenditures; 5. It provides state reimbursement for additional program costs, including emergency general assistance, temporary housing, interpreter services and administrative expenses; and 6. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide the services necessary to support municipalities, including education and training for certain state employees, 24-hour technical assistance, written decisions and a database.
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FOOD SECURITY BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 568	Rep. Matthew Pouliot	An Act to Provide Funding for the State Fund to Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives	Passed to be Enacted in the House and Senate. Placed on the Special Appropriations Table – Carried over	This bill provides ongoing General Fund appropriations of \$600,000 to the Fund To Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The bill also removes the \$50,000 limit on matching contributions from the fund criteria.
LD 1612	Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross	An Act to Address Food Insecurity and Support Local Agriculture	Was in possession of the Senate when the Legislature adjourned – this bill is now dead – but included in Governor's budget	<u>included in the Budget Change Package.</u> This bill provides one-time funding for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to contract with the Preble Street Food Security Hub to help address food insecurity throughout the State. The department is required to report on the distribution of the funds by Preble Street.

Federal Legislation Update

BUDGET & FUNDING-RELATED ITEMS - Updates

➔ **Debt ceiling & Proposed Federal Budget Cuts – No New Update** – Congress passed and President Joe Biden signed into law the “Fiscal Responsibility Act,” an agreement to lift the federal debt ceiling until 2025 in exchange for capping federal spending programs at FY 23 levels in FY 24 and allowing an only 1% increase in spending in FY25. The bill also rescinds unspent COVID-19 relief funds, imposes more work requirements on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients, and reallocates funding previously provided to help the IRS audit higher-income households for other purposes. Because some HUD programs require additional funding annually, the debt ceiling agreement acts as a cut to affordable housing and homelessness assistance. In FY 24 alone, HUD needs an estimated \$13 billion to \$16 billion in additional funding just to maintain current levels of assistance.

➔ **Senate FY 24 THUD Bill – New** – On 7/20 the Senate T-HUD Appropriations Committee released its FY 24 spending bill. Overall, the bill provides \$70.06 billion for HUD’s affordable housing, homelessness, and community development programs, an increase of \$8.26 billion (or slightly more than 13%) over FY23-enacted levels. However, HUD needs to increase funding by approximately \$13 billion just to maintain existing levels of assistance. Though, the Senate draft proposes \$1.86 billion more in funding for HUD’s vital affordable housing and homelessness programs than the draft spending bill released by the U.S. House of Representatives on 7/11. The Senate THUD bill provides increased funding for key HUD programs, particularly those vital to getting or keeping people with the lowest incomes housed. The bill proposes:

- \$31.7 billion for the Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program (\$1.48 billion more than FY 23).
 - Expected to be sufficient to renew existing contracts and provides funding for an additional 4,000 vouchers targeted to Veterans at risk of or experiencing homelessness and youth aging out of foster care – including \$30 million for VASH (\$20 million decrease from FY 23) and \$30 million for the Family Unification Program (FUP)
- \$15.7 billion for Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) program (\$884 million more than FY 23).
- \$686 for Section 811 Mainstream vouchers (\$78 million increase from FY 23).
- \$3.9 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) program (\$275 million increase from FY 23). Within this is:
 - \$100 million for the construction, preservation, and operation of permanent supportive housing, and \$31 million for capacity-building grants and technical assistance.
 - Language that would allow HUD to complete funds every other year, cut down on time and resources spent on paperwork, and allow service providers to focus on delivering assistance (aka 2-year NOFOs).
- \$1.5 billion for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) and the recently authorized Grants to Identify and Remove Barriers to Affordable Housing program.
- \$1.5 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) (same as FY 23).
- \$4.5 billion for CDBG (decrease of \$1.9 billion from FY 23). of that amount \$3.3 billion is allocated for formula funding, while approximately \$1.06 billion is earmarked for specific community development projects. The Senate proposal would also provide \$100 million in funding for grants to identify and remove barriers to affordable housing – a \$15 million increase from FY23. The program is zeroed out in the House draft.
- Level funding for Section 202 Housing for the Elderly, Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities, Housing Counseling Assistance, and fair housing programs.

➔ **House FY 24 Appropriation Bills (including THUD) – Update** – On 7/27, the House Committee on Appropriations approved all 12 of its FY 24 appropriations bills, including the FY24 THUD spending bill. The bill proposes funding HUD at \$68.2 billion, a \$6.4 billion (or roughly 10%) increase to HUD programs over previously enacted levels. HUD needs an approximately \$13 billion increase in funding over current levels just to maintain existing assistance. The spending bill proposes deep cuts to or even elimination of some HUD programs but appears to adequately fund most rental assistance programs. The bill would:

- Fund Tenant-Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) and Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) programs at levels that may be sufficient to renew existing contracts.
- Provide a slight increase for HUD’s Homeless Assistance Grants (HAG) program.

Other HUD programs would face funding cuts, including:

- The Public Housing Capital Fund, Public Housing Operating Fund, Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities, and Section 202 Housing for the Elderly.
- The HOME Investments Partnership Program would be cut by more than half.
- Funding for several other programs – including the Family Unification Program, Incremental Vouchers, Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, and Housing Mobility Services – would be zeroed out completely.

House Republican’s FY 24 Agriculture Appropriations bill – No New Update – on 5/17 House Republicans released their FY 24 agriculture appropriations bill which proposes policy changes and funding cuts to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), that would result in benefit cuts or loss of eligibility for millions of people. To adhere to the funding caps on annual appropriations proposed under House Republicans’ debt-ceiling-and-cuts bill, the proposal would cut WIC benefits for 5 million pregnant and postpartum participants and young

children under 5. The bill also proposes including an expansion of SNAP's existing work-reporting requirement to include older adults aged 50 to 55. These changes would put approximately 1 million older adults at risk of losing their SNAP benefits.

BILLS – Updates

HR 5221 Homeless Children and Youth Act Tenants' Right to organize Act – [New](#) – On 8/15 Representatives Mikie Sherrill, Bill Posey, Delia Ramirez, and Don Bacon reintroduced the bipartisan Homeless Children and Youth Act. This bill remedies the issue of most children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness being ineligible for homeless assistance because they do not meet the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition of homelessness by aligning federal definitions of homelessness for children and youth, streamlining assistance, leveraging resources, and bringing greater visibility to the reality of family and youth homelessness.

S 1557/ HR 3238 The Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act – [No New Update](#) – Senator Angus King cosponsored bipartisan legislation to create nearly two million new affordable homes across the country – including thousands in Maine. The Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act would expand the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) to provide more homes for low-income people, support small businesses trying to attract workers, and fill the state's gap of more than 20,000 affordable housing units. The bill would:

- Increase the number of credits available to states by 50 percent for the next two years and make the temporary 12.5 percent increase secured in 2018 permanent—which has already helped build more than 59,000 additional affordable housing units nationwide.
- Stabilize financing for workforce housing projects built using private activity bonds by decreasing the amount of private activity bonds needed to secure Housing Credit funding. As a result, projects would have to carry less debt, and more projects would be eligible to receive funding.

S 1436, CHARGE Act of 2023 – [No New Update](#) – Introduced on 5/3 by Senator Jon Tester, this bill would permanently authorize additional services for Veterans experiencing homelessness that were authorized at the beginning of the pandemic. These services include: Basic essentials like food, shelter, clothing, blankets, and hygiene items; Transportation to appointments with service providers and conducting housing searches; and ways to stay in touch with providers and landlords, such as tablets, smartphones, and data plans.

HR 3848, Housing Our Military Veterans Effectively Act of 2023 – [No New Update](#) – Introduced on 7/26 by Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer, this bill would revive crucial services authorized during the pandemic to provide lifesaving services under the Grant and Per Diem Program (GPD), which funds transitional housing programs for homeless veterans. These services include transportation to doctor appointments and food banks, communications devices for hearing impaired veterans, personal care products along with a dearth of other vital services and resources. that have led to a significant increase in the housing stability and improved the lives of veterans across the country.

HR 645, the Healthy Foundations for Homeless Veterans Act, introduced in the House would authorize these additional services for an additional two years.

S 1257, Family Stability and Opportunity Vouchers Act – [No new update](#) – This bill was reintroduced in the Senate on 4/25 by Senators Van Hollen and Young. This bipartisan bill would create 250,000 new housing vouchers, paired with mobility-related services, to help low-income families with young children move to communities of their choice, including neighborhoods with high-performing schools and high-quality childcare and early education programs.

S 24 / HR 516 Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act – [No New Update](#) – Introduced by Senator Feinstein in the Senate and Congressman Lieu in the House, this bill would authorize a grant program within the Health Resources and Services Administration for housing programs that offer comprehensive services and intensive case management for homeless individuals and families. The program would include five-year implementation grants to assist such entities in carrying out activities and paying capital building costs associated with the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families.

S 680 DASH Act – [No New Update](#) – Reintroduced by Senator Wyden on 3/7, the [DASH Act](#) would make a generational investment to house all people experiencing homelessness, tackle the housing affordability crisis, and expand homeownership opportunities for young people by creating a new down payment tax credit for first-time homebuyers. The DASH Act would make stable, safe and decent housing available for all by:

- Housing everyone experiencing homelessness within five years, and prioritizing children and families for placement, by issuing them a Housing Choice Voucher, because young children are heavily impacted by housing instability, and because housing is a chief determinant of health;
- Expanding health, child care, financial and nutrition services for families and individuals to stay on a path to unassisted housing stability, because the climb out of housing poverty is nearly impossible to complete alone;
- Greatly increasing the production of deeply affordable housing for families exiting homelessness and for low-income households by investing in effective, efficient existing programs and reforming the tax code to strengthen the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) to weather the economic fallout from the pandemic, as well as establish a Renter's Tax Credit and Middle-Income Housing Tax Credit (MIHTC);

- Investing in homeownership in underserved communities and for low income Americans with new tax credits and down payment assistance, including a down payment tax credit for first-time homebuyers; and
- Incentivizing environmentally-friendly development strategies and land use policies.
- Permanent authorization of appropriations for McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act grants.

HR 1708 Housing is a Human Right Act of 2023 – No New Update – On 3/22 Rep. Pramila Jayapal introduced the Housing is a Human Right Act of 2023, which would address root causes of homelessness, meet the needs of community members experiencing harms from homelessness, transition communities towards providing housing for all, end penalization of homelessness, and ensure full democratic participation and inclusion of persons experiencing homelessness, and for other purposes.

HR 773 Homelessness and Behavioral Health Care Coordination Act– No New Update – On 2/2 Rep. Madeleine Dean reintroduced HR 773, the Homelessness and Behavioral Health Care Coordination Act, co-sponsored by Rep. Sylvia Garcia. This bill would help people experiencing homelessness and behavioral health issues, including substance use disorder, access critical supportive services by authorizing a grant program within HUD to help state and local governments, tribal entities, public housing agencies, and Continuums of Care better coordinate services for behavioral health, including substance use disorder and homelessness.

S 255 Asylum Seekers Work Authorization Act of 2023 – No New Update – On 2/3 Senators Collins and Sinema reintroduced the Asylum Seekers Work Authorization Act of 2023, which would make asylum seekers eligible to receive work authorizations starting 30 days after filing an asylum application. Senator King is an original co-sponsor. On 3/1, Congresswoman Chellie Pingree reintroduced the Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act in the House.

HR 9587 Tenants’ Right to organize Act – No new update – On 12/19 Rep. Andy Levin introduced the Tenant’s Right to Organize Act. Per NLIHC, the bill would “protect the organizing rights of tenants with Housing Choice Vouchers (HCVs) and tenants living in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties. Currently, only public housing tenants have a legally recognized right to organize. In extending the right to organize to HCV and LIHTC tenants, the bill recognizes that all tenants have the right to decent, safe, stable, and sanitary housing.”

RULES/Other Federal Items of Note – No Update

State Update: Please see the Bill Tracking document for the State legislature Update.