

EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

One City Center

Thursday, November 16, 2023
8:30 AM

AGENDA

1. **Introductions**
 - a. Review and Approval of MInutes.
2. **Monthly Shelter Bed Usage Statistics**
 - a. October Statistics
3. **Encampment Update**
 - a. City Council Update
4. **Hub 2 Update**
5. **Winter Planning**
6. **Federal, State and Local Legislation**
 - a. Providing for Unhoused People with Pets Act of 2023 (PUPP ACT)
7. **Region 1 Update**
8. **Other Business**

Next Meeting

November 16, 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

One City Center

Thursday, August 17, 2023

8:30 am – 10:00 am

Minutes

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Jim DeVine	Homeless Voices for Justice	Rita DeFio	Shalom House
Ben Skillings	Greater Portland Peer Services	Briana Costello	Maine Health
Bill Higgins	Homeless Advocacy for All	Cullen Ryan	Community Housing of Maine
Terrence Miller	Preble Street	Stephanie Gilbert	District Attorney's Office
Brian Townsend	commonsplace	Rachel Cohen	Vox Media
Eric Brewer		Aaron Geyer	City of Portland
Ben Martineau	Homeless Voices for Justice	Anne-Marie Brown	United Way of Southern Maine

Introductions

Approval of June Minutes –

- Motion by Jim DeVine, Second by Ben Martineau, All were in favor.

July, 2023 Statistics

- Intakes appear to be so low because there is little turnover in the shelters (not enough housing placement opportunities)
- Housing placement stats showed very high average bed nights for those placed likely because these were long term stayers (prioritized by the shelters for housing)
- 190 people placed in the two hotels (Lewiston hotel for short term, Freeport hotel for longer term)
- Fore River encampment has approximately 60 tents at last count (many with multiple people per tent)
- Across all encampments in the City, estimated 214 people
- Need to fix the Florence House statistics (same number as the HSC for every day of the month)
- Criminal Trespass Order (CTO) clarification discussion – Oxford Street shelter CTOs did not transfer over to the new Homeless Services Center, per Aaron

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- Challenge is that each shelter keeps their own CTO data – it isn't transparent
- CTOs are for violent offenses and are for one year from the HSC
- CTOs are way down in the HSC vs Oxford Street – shows that the shelter is a much better space for those staying there by intentional design (more space/less congested, more privacy, own bed, lockers, meals on site, medical on site, etc.); went from 9,000 sq ft to 52,000 sq ft
- If coming from an encampment, have discussed lifting CTOs on a case by case basis to get people inside
- Looked at the Fore River encampment by name list and no one has a CTO
- The HSC also issues restrictions – which can be some of the confusion (when those in encampments are saying they can't go to the shelter) – restrictions are for non-violent offenses and could be for half an hour to a month – not formally tracked
- Brian noted that the confusion isn't always from the source (City), but from providers giving information to multiple people, room for improvement (between restrictions and CTOs)
- Would like to begin including encampment numbers in the monthly statistics (could come from outreach workers); another option to include could be the Hub 2 By Name Lists stats
- Note – the City has two open Outreach Worker positions – currently hiring

Encampment Update

- The taskforce is continuing to work with community partners and held the second housing fair at the encampment yesterday (8/16); included the City's social services team, commonspace, Preble Street rapid rehousing, MaineHousing, PHA waitlist, apps for management companies that have openings. Able to get 11 people back on the centralized waiting list or reactivates; plan to do this weekly at the encampments; Also including Spurwink with a clinician & BRAP applications;
- Question – If people need documentation, is there money available to help them get this together? Yes and no. No set funds, but for example HSC has client support funds that can be used.
- Bill Higgins wants to contribute to the City to do that specifically to help people get into housing faster, probably can get public support for that – to help facilitate the process. Noted that this hasn't been a barrier that they've seen (per City).
- Seeing success with placements.
- Question – Given successes, has the city reconsidered the sweep date of Sept 6? Why disperse people to another location if people are in that location now are seeing success, why not put all energy and efforts into this?
- Have seen up to 12 placements from the HSC, which opens up space for people from the encampment. Hoping for 8 to 10 per week. Trying to push for more successes before reconsidering the sweep date.
- The counter was that the notices are up, and the trauma and fear are already increased.

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- The ECRT group came together in May to resolve the fore river encampment – the Sept 6 deadline has been out since June, not new.
- In the larger ECRT meeting, other providers in the room felt that having the date was a way to get and build momentum (not leaving it undefined).
- Focusing on the next 3 weeks, let's try to get as many people housed in those 21 days and then see where we are.
- With the water, porta potties, dumpster there – these are not on City property and agreements were made with the removal dates for them.
- It was noted that one of the challenges in housing placements is with landlords taking vouchers.
- Where will the next encampment task force concentration area be? Anticipate that it will be Marginal Way – but not confirmed.
- Can we have dumpster and porta potties at Marginal Way? The City is having some of these preliminary discussions now.
- The Marginal Way Park & Ride lot is DOT property – they came up with the plan to separate the parking lot so that cars are only able to use a portion of the lot and the other is for those in tents to provide more safety. They have asked for that to be the next concentration site.
- Discussion about the 'sweep' language. Words matter – very different to say we're going to sweep the site on Sept 6, vs saying we're going to do everything we can to house you or find you shelter within the next three weeks. The 'sweep' language isn't used by outreach staff in the encampments.
- Discussed the utility of setting a date – the urgency to push towards finding housing.
- Is anything planned to be procedurally different for the 'sweep' in September than the one in Bayside in April? Not yet, the focus is on the 21 days to get people into shelter or housing.
- Jim DeVine shared praise for how the City treated people in the Bayside encampment when it was swept – giving people time and with respect. Asked for this to be shared with City staff.

Region 1 Update

- None given.

Hub 2 Update

- Case Conferencing began on August 14th, and there are 72 people currently on the By Name List.
- Praise was shared for Nakesha, the new Hub 2 Coordinator.

Expo Closure

- The Expo was decommissioned as a shelter yesterday – moving 190 individuals/60 families. They relocated to two hotels – one in Freeport and one in Lewiston. 37 families went to Freeport (because already had 8 families there), and the rest to Lewiston. The

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process went well, moved all out in the morning, checked in, delivered dinner last night. Will continue to support that group.

- Provided education around cooking in the hotel rooms. Rooms have a microwave, refrigerator, and the City purchased instapots. They talked with Preble St and the Food Hub because they have done a lot of work with the Saco hotel and what came out of that was that a lot of the prepared meals weren't being eaten as much. Feedback was that families wanted more raw ingredients to cook their own, used the instapot. City provided instapot education in the expo, and the ordered instapots are coming in on Tuesday. Preble St will continue to cook the hotel meals and the City will deliver them until they change over to just providing ingredients. Thursday they will stock the pantries at the hotels.
- The resettlement team from the expo will now cover each of the hotels with a housing team model Mon-Fri.
- Working with a housing group in Lewiston that has funding for housing navigation.
- There was already an established group/community in Freeport with some services set up (8 families were already there in that hotel).

Winter Planning

- Kevin Bunker is working on the emergency shelter for single adult asylum seekers, which will open later this year and can accommodate 180 people (the HSC has a large % of asylum seekers, so this will open up a great deal of space at the HSC).
- The ECRT has been a good set-up – almost daily communication, hope to leverage that as a new way of operating.
- There has been approval to use the First Parish Church during the day only, and will be starting next week to plan for overnight – capacity is 40-50 ppl.
- Looking for space now, and then will work on staffing later.
- Nothing from Maine Housing yet on warming shelter funding – hoping it will come out earlier this year (last year it was well into the winter).
- Would like to have people with lived experience to be hired for staff, training, funding to help compensate them, would like to be in place way before winter begins.

Federal, State, and Local Legislation Update

- Federal
 - The biggest thing is working towards an omnibus bill. What has come out so far has included the Hud budget.
 - The Senate outcomes have been good, with increases in most of the Hud areas that impact us, and also support of all other pieces. The only thing left low was the community development block grant
 - The House came out with a much more dramatically cut budget. It will fund section 8 and then cut almost everything else (flat funding or zero out, including the home program).

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- There will be a lot to reconcile between the two. Already a discussion about a government shutdown (which is early to do that).
- Noted an Affordable Housing bill for which Sen King is a cosponsor.
- Homeless Youth bill – a good bill, helps the definition of homeless youth, and to encompass couch surfing.
- State
 - Legislature adjourned – an active session – big wins came out of the Governor’s budget – which passed.
 - To fund 65 million in affordable housing, divided evenly between rural development and low-income tax credit.
 - Maine Housing can get it out quickly for the rural housing –
 - Housing First – huge victory – feels like this could allow us to end chronic homelessness in future.
 - Site based housing support.
 - Set the bar for all other housing first and permanent supportive housing – support of 20 hours/wk (versus currently 2 hours/mo).
 - Creates two fixes to Medicaid – home wrap around low barrier services, the problem was that the rates were too low, this fixes that problem; will hire housing stability workers to focus on chronically homeless.
 - Won’t be funded until 2025.
 - Statewide homeless council working on the MaineCare changes.
 - Food security bill – going to the Food Hub for Preble Street.
 - Great legislative session.
- Local

Other items, updates, and announcements

- Jim DeVine – HVJ – The “You don’t need a home to vote.” campaign will begin soon.
- There will be two candidates forums, trying to have one at HSC (Oct 9, 9:30am, district 5 candidates; Friday in October – date TBD)
 - City Council, rent control will be another focus.
- Bill Higgins– will be in Washing D.C. for the National Coalition for the Homeless

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Remote Meeting

Thursday, February 16, 2023

8:30 am – 10:00 am

Minutes

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Adam Harr	City of Portland	Josh Ruitto	HSC
Anne-Marie Brown	UWSM	Brian Townsend	Amistad
Sven Lee	VA	Jenny Stasio	Through These Doors
Mike Guthrie	City of Portland	Ben Martineau	HVJ
Cullen Ryan	CHOM	Lauren Chan	City of Portland
Stephanie Gilbert	DHHS	Ben Skillings	Greater Portland Peer services
Taylor Cray	Preble Street	Harry	Greater Portland Peer services
Jim Devine	HVJ	Terrence Miller	Preble Street
Eric Brewer	HVJ	George Rheault	Resident
Bill Higgins	Ha4aLL		

Meeting Summary

The meeting focused on the unsheltered homelessness. Prevention and Diversion Program manager Lauren Chan explained the bed referral process and clarified that the 180 beds offered are cumulative over the Fore River ECRT and that the HSC is full every night with beds offered to people camping first and then filled by others if no one camping takes them. NOTED: Prevention and Diversion can be contact at padstaff@portlandmaine.gov.

August Statistics

- 180 beds offered during the ECRT are form the daily ECRT emails of beds offered per day.
 - Could we add a column on how many beds are offered per day?
 - Offered in the morning, wait until lunch before giving the bed to people referred throughout the day. Beds are filled every night.
 - Each dally offered beds equals the 180 quoted.

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- Each ask for a bed is tracked, including self-referral and by agency.
- Can this info be shared?
- What time does the email go out?
 - Between 9:30 and 10:00 as morning HSC check-in goes until 9:00.
 - An evening email goes out around 6:00 PM.
- We are at capacity every night.
 - Occasionally takes time to fill women's beds.
- Is there diversion to keep people from going into shelter?
 - Yes, P&D interviews for other resources first.
- Housing Problem Solving Funds are ending for the year; P&D refers to TBRA and General Assistance.
 - Average of \$600 per person prevents homelessness.
- Can P&D go to Region 1?
- Can PRCC be added to shelter bed availability?
 - Will share P&D contact.
- if all people experiencing unsheltered homelessness wanted to go in, there would not be enough space; all available beds are offered to outreach workers to target unsheltered first.
- Has the City conducted a survey of the barriers of why they do not want to go into the HSC?
 - Barriers is a column tracked in case conferencing.
- The City offers tours of the HSC to dispel misconceptions.
 - How can outreach workers help disseminate correct information?
 - Direct to the HSC directly.
- Pine Street Inn did a survey of an encampment asking what it would take to get into shelter?
 - Outside lockers.
 - Sanctioned use facility as part of the shelter.
- HVJ has had semi regular meetings at the HSC.
- 200 homeless veterans in the state.
 - HSC tracks veterans.
 - Referred to the VA.
- Will Share Lauren's Prevention & Diversion contact info.
- 82 Middle Street
 - Holding units for LTS
- Will add an asterisk that CTOs form OSS are retained in this stat but were nit reissued as CTOs at the HSC.
- Danforth is processing applications.
- Phoenix Flats still has 2 units open.
- Riverside extension will have 179 beds.
 - Additional staff will be recruited.
 - City will run the shelter for the first 18 months.

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Encampment Update/Hub 2 Update

- Nakesha and Aaron are at the Built for Zero conference for concrete examples of communities that have reached functional zero.
- September 6 Fore River clearing led to losing contact with some people in the camp.
 - Some asked to be removed from list.
 - Some retained but asked their location will not be shared.
- 85 people living at marginal way encampment which is the next camp the ECRT will focus on.
- 85 people assessed and on the hub priority housing list.
- 1 person housed.
- 20 total got vouchers, 3 with housing. (EHV vouchers)
- Another encampment listening session next Tuesday with public comment.
 - Any increase in capacity needs to talk about accessibility and barriers that currently exist.

Region 1

- Discussed encampments and winter planning.
- Meets next week at 1:00 PM on Zoom.
 - Contact Jenny Stasio to get added.

Winter Planning

- Will there be more warming centers this year?
- HHS&PS will discuss winter planning and warming center protocol at their October Meeting.
- Funds for MSHA warming shelter came out late last year.
 - Friday Portland Peer Services meeting with HHS Director Kristen Dow and Emergency Manager Caity Haiger on this funding.
 - Accommodate 80 people.
- Food
 - Food is delivered to encampments and litter is an issue for the neighborhoods.
 - Is there an ask on trash pick up?
 - The van functions as a way for street outreach and other providers to reach people; food is ancillary.
 - Joe Conroy is in charge of the food program.
 - Can we get a food update at the next meeting?
 - Could food distribution be under a roof during the Winter?
- Is there an agency/nonprofit that can accept donations that fund warming centers/winter supplies?
 - Similar to the asylum seeker fundraising?
 - Lists of specific needs.

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Legislative Update

- Federal
 - House is threatening a government shutdown.
 - House republican budget slashes everything.
 - Senate has a good HUD budget.
 - Senator King cosponsored the Affordable Housing improvement act what zeroes in on people with extremely low incomes.
 - Housing Access bill streamlines access to services through Medicaid.
 - Farm bill is looking at republican cuts.
- State
 - Bills due next Friday.
 - GA may see changes.
 - Hoping to see a 90% reimbursement rate but it did not make it through the normal session.
 - \$70 million in affordable housing last session.
 - Housing first legislation passed; \$11 million for services.
 - \$5 million for shelter system.
 - ADU law passed.
 - Rural housing RFP is out.
 - Emergency session has a lot of carry over bills.
 - ARPA funds are coming to a close.
 - This legislature cares about homelessness.
 - When the state has surplus, did they put an additional into \$75 million into housing?
 - Current excess “rainy day” fund is nearly \$1 billion.
 - New SNAP benefit law
 - Opportunity for people who are homeless no longer have to do work requirement.
 - Anyone who is homeless would be able to get snap benefits.
 - Couch surfing counts now.
 - Emergency bill \$10 million in shelter operations.

Other Business

- 10/16/23 HVJ candidate’s forum at 9:30 AM at the HSC
- 10/27/23 9:30 to 11:30 and 12:30 to 2:00 at 55 Portland Street for mayoral candidates in the morning and at-large and district 4 candidates in the afternoon.

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3957

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to make grants to modify and upgrade structures to serve as interim and permanent housing to accommodate unhoused individuals with pets, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 9, 2023

Mr. CROW (for himself, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Ms. MACE, and Mr. SCHIFF) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to make grants to modify and upgrade structures to serve as interim and permanent housing to accommodate unhoused individuals with pets, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Providing for
5 Unhoused People with Pets Act of 2023” or the “PUPP
6 Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. GRANT PROGRAM FOR UPGRADING STRUCTURES**
2 **TO SERVE AS INTERIM AND PERMANENT**
3 **HOUSING TO ACCOMMODATE UNHOUSED IN-**
4 **DIVIDUALS WITH PETS.**

5 (a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Secretary of Agriculture, act-
6 ing in direct consultation with the Secretary of Housing
7 and Urban Development, may carry out a program under
8 this section to make grants to eligible entities for pro-
9 viding interim and permanent housing that accommodates
10 homeless persons, and homeless families, who have pets.

11 (b) **USE.**—Amounts from a grant under this section
12 may be used only for—

13 (1) costs of acquiring, renovating, rehabili-
14 tating, re-purposing, retrofitting, or constructing a
15 property to be used as interim or permanent housing
16 that accommodates homeless persons, and homeless
17 families, who have pets;

18 (2) pet-related costs of operating such housing
19 as provided in this section; and

20 (3) costs of training staff and volunteers associ-
21 ated with such housing in basic pet care, including
22 nutrition, behavioral training, and health mainte-
23 nance.

24 (c) **REQUIREMENTS.**—Interim or permanent housing
25 assisted with amounts from a grant under this Act shall
26 comply with the following requirements:

1 (1) SERVICES.—

2 (A) SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.—Appropriate
3 supportive services, including mental health,
4 employment, substance use disorder, and
5 wellness services, shall be made available to oc-
6 cupants of the housing.

7 (B) VETERINARY SERVICES.—Basic veteri-
8 nary care and behavioral support for pets, in-
9 cluding spay and neuter, basic wellness exami-
10 nations, vaccinations, dental care, heartworm
11 treatment and prevention, flea and tick treat-
12 ment and prevention, and basic medical proce-
13 dures, shall be made available for pets of occu-
14 pants of the housing.

15 (C) LOCATION.—Services required under
16 this paragraph shall be made available on-site
17 in such housing, except that services that can-
18 not be furnished on-site may be made available
19 off-site, but only if direct linkage to transpor-
20 tation services is made available to occupants to
21 access such services.

22 (2) ANIMAL HOUSING.—The housing shall pro-
23 vide accommodations for pets of occupants of the
24 housing that are appropriate for the layout and type

1 of the interim or permanent housing, which may in-
2 clude crates and kennels.

3 (3) COORDINATION.—The manager of the hous-
4 ing shall—

5 (A) coordinate with public services and law
6 enforcement agencies to provide services and
7 safety for the housing, as the Secretary shall
8 require;

9 (B) coordinate with local veterinary service
10 and animal care providers to provide care for
11 pets that accompany occupants of the housing;
12 and

13 (C) in making occupancy available in the
14 housing, coordinate with the administrative en-
15 tity for the Continuum of Care under subtitle
16 C of title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless
17 Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11381 et seq.) for
18 the area in which the housing is located.

19 (d) APPLICATIONS; PLAN.—

20 (1) APPLICATION.—The Secretary shall provide
21 for eligible entities to submit applications for grants
22 under this section and shall require such applica-
23 tions to include a plan under paragraph (2).

24 (2) PLAN.—A plan under this paragraph
25 shall—

1 (A) identify existing housing, shelters, or
2 unused structures or land within the area
3 served by the eligible entity submitting the ap-
4 plication that will be used for providing the
5 housing to be assisted under subsection (b) with
6 amounts from a grant under this section;

7 (B) identify the extent of need, in the area
8 of such housing, shelters, structures, or land
9 identified, for interim or permanent housing for
10 homeless persons with pets;

11 (C) identify partnering veterinary service
12 and animal care providers that will provide care
13 for pets that accompany occupants of the hous-
14 ing and any partnering animal welfare organi-
15 zation;

16 (D) include such assurances as the Sec-
17 retary considers necessary to ensure that such
18 housing will be provided using grant amounts,
19 that such housing will accommodate homeless
20 persons, and homeless families, who have pets,
21 and that such housing will comply with the re-
22 quirements under subsection (c); and

23 (E) provide for targeted outreach to indi-
24 viduals experiencing homelessness within the
25 area served by the eligible entity receiving a

1 grant under this section to inform such individ-
2 uals regarding the availability of the housing
3 assisted with grant amounts.

4 (3) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall select ap-
5 plications to be awarded such grants on a competi-
6 tive basis, based on criteria that the Secretary shall
7 establish.

8 (e) REPORTS.—Each eligible entity that receives a
9 grant under this section for a fiscal year shall submit a
10 report to the Secretary, not later than 90 days after the
11 end of the fiscal year for which the grant was made, that
12 shall include the following information:

13 (1) A description of the activities undertaken by
14 the eligible entity using such grant amounts.

15 (2) Identification of the costs of each of the
16 services provided in connection with the housing as-
17 sisted with such grant amounts.

18 (3) An assessment of the effectiveness of the
19 program grants under this section and any rec-
20 ommendations for improving the program.

21 (f) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section, the
22 following definitions shall apply:

23 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—

24 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “eligible enti-
25 ty” means—

- 1 (i) a unit of general local government;
2 (ii) a nonprofit organization; and
3 (iii) an entity providing housing or
4 shelters for homeless persons.

5 (B) LIMITATION.—Such term does not in-
6 clude an animal wellness or welfare organiza-
7 tion or an animal shelter, except that this sub-
8 paragraph may not be construed to prevent any
9 such organization or shelter from partnering
10 with an eligible entity to provide interim or per-
11 manent housing assisted with amounts from a
12 grant under this Act.

13 (2) HOMELESS.—The term “homeless” has the
14 meaning given such term in section 103 of the
15 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42
16 U.S.C. 11302).

17 (3) INTERIM HOUSING.—The term “interim
18 housing” means any housing or shelter that does not
19 provide permanent housing. Such term includes
20 transitional housing (as such term is defined in such
21 section 401) and emergency shelters (as such term
22 is defined in section 321 of such Act (42 U.S.C.
23 13351)).

24 (4) PERMANENT HOUSING.—The term “perma-
25 nent housing” has the meaning given such term in

1 section 401 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assist-
2 ance Act (42 U.S.C. 11360).

3 (5) PET.—The term “pet” means any domes-
4 ticated animal that is normally maintained as a com-
5 panion or pet animal near the owner or person who
6 cares for the animal, such as a domestic dog (includ-
7 ing a service dog), domestic cat, ferret, gerbil,
8 mouse, rat, guinea pig, rabbit, hamster, or bird.

9 (6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
10 the Secretary of Agriculture.

11 (7) UNIT OF GENERAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—
12 The term “unit of general local government” has the
13 meaning given such term in the first sentence of
14 paragraph (1) of section 102(a) of the Housing and
15 Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C.
16 5302(a)(1)).

17 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
18 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
19 \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028.

○