

**Legislative/Nominating
Committee Agenda**
January 26, 2024



MEMBERS
Mayor Mark Dion, Chair
Councilor Pious Ali
Councilor Kate Sykes

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I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Meeting minutes

- a. Minutes from the meeting of January 23, 2024

III. Discussion with Portland Delegation

- a. LD 1732 (An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program)
- b. LD 2167 (An Act to Develop Maine's Economy and Strengthen Its Workforce by Establishing an Office of New Americans)

IV. Other Business

V. Adjournment

**Legislative/Nominating
Committee Minutes**
January 23, 2024



MEMBERS
Mayor Mark Dion, Chair
Councilor Pious Ali
Councilor Kate Sykes

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:03AM. In attendance were Mayor Mark Dion (Chair), Councilor Kate Sykes, Councilor Pious Ali, City Manager Danielle West, Dena Libner (Chief of Staff), Kate Knox (Bernstein Shur), and Chris Knox (Bernstein Shur).

II. Approval of Meeting minutes

- a. Minutes from the meeting of January 9, 2024

Councilor Ali made a motion to approve the minutes from January 9, 2024, seconded by Councilor Sykes, vote (2-0, Councilor Ali absent).

III. Legislative Update

- a. Review: New LDs List and Tracker (Bernstein Shur)

Councilor Sykes made a motion to send testimony in support of LD 2136 (An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelters for Unhoused Individuals), seconded by Councilor Ali, vote (3-0).

Councilor Sykes made a motion to write a letter in support of LD 2146 (An Act to Prohibit Certain Municipalities from Adopting Moratoria on Emergency Shelters), seconded by Councilor Ali, vote (3-0).

IV. Other Business

- a. Review and Finalize the 2024 Committee Work Plan (Mayor Mark Dion, Chair)

Councilor Ali made a motion to approve the 2024 Work Plan, seconded by Councilor Sykes, vote (3-0).

- b. Property Tax Stabilization Program Update (Danielle West, City Manager)

V. Adjournment

Councilor Sykes made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Chair Mayor Dion, vote (3-0).



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1732

H.P. 1111

House of Representatives, April 20, 2023

An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program

(EMERGENCY)

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative MEYER of Eliot.

1 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not
2 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

3 **Whereas,** provisions in this legislation take effect July 1, 2023; and

4 **Whereas,** unless this legislation takes effect immediately, the provisions in the bill
5 cannot be effectuated; and

6 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within
7 the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as
8 immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now,
9 therefore,

10 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

11 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §4302-A** is enacted to read:

12 **§4302-A. Training for overseers and municipal officials**

13 **1. Training required.** No later than the 120th day after appointment or election, an
14 overseer, municipal official designated by the overseers to administer this chapter and any
15 municipal official appointed to administer this chapter shall complete training on the
16 requirements of this chapter.

17 **2. Training; minimum requirements.** The department shall ensure that all overseers
18 and municipal officials have access to training required in subsection 1, at no cost to the
19 overseer or municipal official, that can be completed in less than 4 hours and is accessible
20 either in-person, online or via a pre-recorded video presentation. At a minimum, the
21 training must include instruction on the purpose of the general assistance program and the
22 laws governing its administration, procedures and requirements. Participation in a training
23 program offered by a statewide association of general assistance administrators meets the
24 training requirements under subsection 1.

25 **Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §4304, sub-§1,** as amended by PL 1991, c. 209, §1, is further
26 amended to read:

27 **1. Local office.** There must be in each municipality a general assistance office or
28 designated place where any person may apply for general assistance ~~at during regular;~~
29 ~~reasonable times designated by the municipal officers~~ business hours. Notice must be
30 posted of these times, the name of the overseer available to take applications in an
31 emergency at all other times, the fact that the municipality must issue a written decision on
32 all applications within 24 hours and the department's toll-free telephone number for
33 reporting alleged violations in accordance with section 4321.

34 **Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §4307, sub-§4,** as amended by PL 2017, c. 130, §1, is further
35 amended to read:

36 **4. Special circumstances.** Overseers of a municipality may not move or transport an
37 applicant or recipient into another municipality to relieve their municipality of
38 responsibility for that applicant's or recipient's support. The municipality of responsibility
39 for relocations and institutional settings is as follows.

40 A. When an applicant or recipient requests relocation to another municipality and the
41 overseers of a municipality assist that person to relocate to another municipality, the

1 municipality from which that person is moving continues to be responsible for the
2 support of the recipient for 30 days, including processing applications and determining
3 eligibility for assistance, unless otherwise agreed upon by the affected municipalities,
4 for 6 months after relocation. As used in this paragraph, "assist" includes:

5 (1) Granting financial assistance to relocate; and

6 (2) Making arrangements for a person to relocate.

7 B. If an applicant is in a group home, shelter, rehabilitation center, nursing home,
8 hospital or other institution at the time of application and has either been in that
9 institution for 6 12 months or less; or had a residence immediately prior to entering the
10 institution ~~which~~ that the applicant had maintained and to which the applicant intends
11 to return, the municipality of responsibility is the municipality where the applicant was
12 a resident immediately prior to entering the institution and that municipality continues
13 to be responsible for the support of the recipient, including processing applications and
14 determining eligibility for assistance, unless otherwise agreed upon by the affected
15 municipalities. For the purpose of this paragraph, a hotel, motel or similar place of
16 temporary lodging is considered an institution when a municipality:

17 (1) Grants financial assistance for a person to move to or stay in temporary
18 lodging;

19 (2) Makes arrangements for a person to stay in temporary lodging;

20 (3) Advises or encourages a person to stay in temporary lodging; or

21 (4) Illegally denies housing assistance and, as a result of that denial, the person
22 stays in temporary lodging.

23 **Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §4311, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. SSSS, §1, is
24 further amended to read:

25 **1. Departmental reimbursement.** When a municipality incurs net general assistance
26 costs in any fiscal year prior to July 1, 2015 in excess of .0003 of that municipality's most
27 recent state valuation relative to the state fiscal year for which reimbursement is being
28 issued, as determined by the State Tax Assessor in the statement filed as provided in Title
29 36, section 381, the Department of Health and Human Services shall reimburse the
30 municipality for 90% of the amount in excess of these expenditures when the department
31 finds that the municipality has been in compliance with all requirements of this chapter. If
32 a municipality elects to determine need without consideration of funds distributed from any
33 ~~municipally-controlled~~ municipally controlled trust fund that must otherwise be considered
34 for purposes of this chapter, the department shall reimburse the municipality for 66 2/3%
35 of the amount in excess of such expenditures when the department finds that the
36 municipality has otherwise been in compliance with all requirements of this chapter.

37 The department shall reimburse each municipality and each Indian tribe 70% of the direct
38 costs incurred by that municipality or tribe on or after July 1, 2015 and until June 30, 2023
39 for the general assistance program granted by that municipality or tribe. ~~For the purposes~~
40 ~~of this subsection, "Indian tribe" has the same meaning as in section 411, subsection 8-A.~~

41 Beginning July 1, 2023, the department shall reimburse each municipality and each Indian
42 tribe 90% of the direct costs incurred by that municipality or tribe for the general assistance
43 program granted by that municipality or tribe. If a municipality elects to determine need

1 without consideration of funds distributed from any municipally controlled trust fund that
2 must otherwise be considered for purposes of this chapter, the department shall reimburse
3 the municipality for 66 2/3% of the amount in excess of such expenditures when the
4 department finds that the municipality has otherwise been in compliance with all
5 requirements of this chapter.

6 For the purposes of this subsection, "Indian tribe" has the same meaning as in section 411,
7 subsection 8-A.

8 **Sec. 5. 22 MRSA §4311, sub-§1-A**, as amended by PL 1995, c. 696, Pt. A, §39, is
9 repealed and the following enacted in its place:

10 **1-A. Municipalities reimbursed.** The department shall reimburse municipalities as
11 follows:

12 A. One hundred percent of the expenses approved pursuant to section 4313 for hospital
13 inpatient or outpatient care at any hospital on behalf of any person who is otherwise
14 eligible and who would have been entitled to receive payments for hospital care if that
15 care had been rendered prior to May 1, 1984 for services under the catastrophic illness
16 program in section 3185;

17 B. One hundred percent of the expenses for emergency general assistance pursuant to
18 this chapter that exceed the maximum levels of assistance established by that
19 municipality;

20 C. One hundred percent of the expenses for temporary housing;

21 D. One hundred percent of the expenses for interpreter services necessary to ensure
22 compliance with this chapter; and

23 E. Five percent of the direct costs incurred for general assistance granted by that
24 municipality for administrative expenses.

25 For purposes of this subsection, "temporary housing" means a hotel, motel or similar place
26 of temporary lodging.

27 **Sec. 6. 22 MRSA §4323, sub-§6** is enacted to read:

28 **6. Education and training.** The department shall require state employees responsible
29 for oversight of the general assistance program and employees of the Human Services
30 Fraud Investigation Unit, established pursuant to section 13, to receive annual training on
31 the administration, implementation and enforcement of the relevant statutes, rules and
32 responsibilities for assisting overseers in administering the general assistance program.

33 **Sec. 7. 22 MRSA §4323, sub-§7** is enacted to read:

34 **7. Twenty-four-hour assistance.** The department shall provide in-person technical
35 assistance to overseers 24 hours a day.

36 **Sec. 8. 22 MRSA §4323, sub-§8** is enacted to read:

37 **8. Written decisions.** Within 24 hours of receiving an inquiry under subsection 7, the
38 department shall provide an overseer with a written decision, including a reference to the
39 relevant statutes or rules used to issue the decision.

40 **Sec. 9. 22 MRSA §4323, sub-§9** is enacted to read:

9. Database. Beginning on July 1, 2025, the department shall provide overseers access to an Internet-based, real-time database containing the information necessary to properly determine an applicant's eligibility.

Sec. 10. Application. That section of this Act that enacts the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, section 4302-A applies to all overseers and municipal officials serving on and after the effective date of this Act.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This bill changes the municipal general assistance program in the following ways:

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.



131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2024

Legislative Document

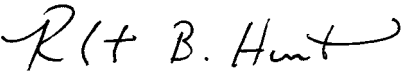
No. 2167

H.P. 1387

House of Representatives, January 16, 2024

An Act to Develop Maine's Economy and Strengthen Its Workforce by Establishing an Office of New Americans

Reference to the Committee on State and Local Government suggested and ordered printed.


ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative DHALAC of South Portland. (GOVERNOR'S BILL)
Cosponsored by Senator BENNETT of Oxford and
Representatives: ABDI of Lewiston, COLLAMORE of Pittsfield, STOVER of Boothbay,
Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland, Senator: ROTUNDO of Androscoggin.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §3110** is enacted to read:

3 **§3110. Office of New Americans**

4 **1. Establishment; purpose; administration.** The Office of New Americans is
5 established within the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future for the purpose of
6 improving the economic and civic integration of immigrants into the State's workforce and
7 communities to strengthen the economy over the long term. The Office of Policy
8 Innovation and the Future shall administer the Office of New Americans.

9 **2. Director; duties.** The director of the Office of New Americans shall serve at the
10 pleasure of the director of the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future. The director of
11 the Office of New Americans shall assist the director of the Office of Policy Innovation
12 and the Future in performing the following duties within the Office of New Americans:

13 A. Hiring professional personnel competent by education, training and experience to
14 carry out the work of the Office of New Americans;

15 B. Supervising and administering the affairs of the Office of New Americans;

16 C. Determining the necessary budget for the Office of New Americans; and

17 D. Reporting on the activities of the Office of New Americans.

18 **3. Duties of the Office of New Americans.** Under the supervision of the director of
19 the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future and the director of the Office of New
20 Americans, and with guidance from the Office of New Americans Advisory Council
21 established in section 3111, the Office of New Americans shall identify and address needs,
22 barriers and opportunities in order to support the long-term economic and civic integration
23 of immigrants in the State by:

24 A. Collecting and analyzing relevant data;

25 B. Coordinating with all relevant local, state and federal government agencies;

26 C. Serving as the State's primary liaison with all relevant external stakeholders; and

27 D. Undertaking and promoting activities that improve the economic and civic
28 integration of immigrants into the State's workforce and communities.

29 **4. Activities.** The Office of New Americans shall undertake and promote activities that
30 improve the economic and civic integration of immigrants into the State's workforce and
31 communities. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

32 A. Strengthening workforce opportunities by providing guidance and promoting
33 improved pathways for professional accreditation and licensure, supporting enhanced
34 career pathways and engaging with businesses to increase employment, retention and
35 advancement of immigrant employees;

36 B. Expanding, improving and increasing access to English language learning programs;

37 C. Supporting the expansion of access to legal services and protections;

38 D. Partnering with and supporting municipalities, school administrative units,
39 educational institutions, community-based organizations and businesses providing
40 assistance or opportunities to immigrants;

1 E. Participating in the nationwide Office of New Americans State Network, or its
2 successor network, to access information and best practices from other states;

3 F. Collaborating with and providing guidance to agencies of State Government and the
4 entity designated by the Federal Government to administer the State's refugee
5 resettlement services in developing and executing policies that support the purpose of
6 the Office of New Americans;

7 G. Coordinating with and advising federal agencies and the State's congressional
8 delegation on federal policies that support the purpose of the Office of New Americans;

9 H. Advising the Governor and Legislature regarding any statutory, regulatory or other
10 policies or practices that may be addressed to better support the purpose of the Office
11 of New Americans; and

12 I. Promoting greater understanding of the history of immigration in the State, the
13 contributions and influence of immigrants in the State and how communities may
14 support immigrants' integration into local civic and economic life.

15 **5. Rulemaking.** The Office of New Americans may adopt rules as necessary for the
16 proper administration of this section and section 3111 pursuant to the Maine Administrative
17 Procedure Act. Unless otherwise specified, rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are
18 routine technical rules as defined in chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

19 **6. Report.** Beginning February 1, 2026, the Office of New Americans shall report
20 biennially to the Governor and to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having
21 jurisdiction over relevant matters with information and recommendations relating to the
22 work and needs of the Office of New Americans.

23 **Sec. 2. 5 MRSA §3111** is enacted to read:

24 **§3111. Office of New Americans Advisory Council**

25 The Office of New Americans Advisory Council, as established in section 12004-I,
26 subsection 6-K, is created as an advisory council to the Office of New Americans
27 established in section 3110 on matters affecting the long-term economic and civic
28 integration of immigrants in the State.

29 **1. Duties of advisory council.** The advisory council shall advise the Office of New
30 Americans on matters affecting the long-term economic and civic integration of immigrants
31 in the State.

32 **2. Membership.** The advisory council consists of 19 members as follows:

33 A. At least 10 members who are immigrants, 8 appointed by the Governor, one
34 appointed by the President of the Senate and one appointed by the Speaker of the
35 House;

36 B. Three members appointed by the President of the Senate representing the following:

37 (1) A school administrative unit;

38 (2) An adult education program; and

39 (3) A small business;

40 C. Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House representing the following:

- (1) An organization providing refugee resettlement services;
(2) A provider of legal assistance to immigrants; and
(3) A municipality; and

D. Three members appointed by the Governor representing the following:

- (1) A large business;
(2) A provider of housing assistance; and
(3) An organization with demonstrated expertise in workforce development.

In making appointments of members to the advisory council, the appointing authorities shall make a good faith effort to ensure that the members of the advisory council reflect geographic, gender, ethnic and racial diversity.

3. Terms of office; removal. Members of the advisory council serve 3-year terms and may be reappointed. A vacancy for an unexpired term must be filled in accordance with subsection 2. A member may serve until a replacement is appointed. The Governor may terminate the membership of any appointee for good cause. The reason for the termination must be communicated in writing to a member whose membership is terminated. The membership of any member of the advisory council must be terminated if the member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings without communicating good cause to a chair of the advisory council.

4. Cochairs. The Governor shall appoint 2 cochairs from among the members appointed and serving pursuant to subsection 2.

5. Meetings; staffing. The advisory council shall meet at the discretion of the cochairs. Meetings may be cancelled or postponed at the discretion of the cochairs. All meetings of the advisory council are public proceedings within the meaning of Title 1, chapter 13, subchapter 1. The Office of New Americans shall provide staffing services as necessary to the advisory council.

Sec. 3. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§6-K is enacted to read:

6-K.

<u>Economic</u>	<u>Office of New Americans Advisory</u>	<u>Not Authorized</u>	<u>5 MRSA</u>
<u>Development</u>	<u>Council</u>		<u>§3111</u>

SUMMARY

This bill establishes the Office of New Americans within the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future and also establishes an advisory council to the Office of New Americans.