

EMERGENCY SHELTER ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

One City Center

Thursday, March 21, 2024
9:00 AM

AGENDA

1. **Introductions**
 - a. January 18, 2024 and February 15, 2024 Minutes
2. **Monthly Shelter Bed Usage Statistics**
 - a. February 2024 Monthly Shelter Statistics
3. **Capacity at the Homeless Services Center (HSC) and 166 Riverside**
4. **Hub 2 Update**
5. **Region 1 Update**
6. **Federal, State and Local Legislation**
 - a. Bill Tracking
7. **Other Business**

Next Meeting

April 18, 2024

Time: 9:00 AM

Location: One City Center

If you should have any questions, please contact:

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1-18-24 ESAC Meeting Minutes

Camping Updates:

Concerns over the tent heat map being created by the City were raised and discussed. Specific concerns included issues of safety and issues of privacy. Capturing basic information about the number of tents across the City itself wasn't a concern, but rather the capturing the specific locations and public sharing of this information was more concerning.

The policy around small campsites being swept (separate from the larger encampment sweeps) was raised as a question. Preble Street had been informed of smaller campsites (with only a few tents and placed out of site) were being swept (or told they would be swept). This would be a change in practice, and opposed to the guidance street outreach workers were providing to those unwilling to go to the HSC (telling people to have smaller sites, kept clean, and placed in less visible locations).

The HSC has seen 9 housing placements this month so far. It also was seeing an average of 10 nights per stay and quick fluctuations in shelter stays – at one point it could be near full, and the next night there could be 20 open beds.

Hub 2 (Cumberland County) currently has 427 people on the by name list, with over 200 people reporting as unsheltered on the list.

The Point in Time (PIT) Count is happening on Tuesday. We know the unsheltered numbers are fluctuating regularly right now, especially due to the cold winter weather that is encouraging more people to go inside.

From the providers, they are seeing a lot of people who want to go to the shelter. A lot more people are asking to go to the shelter, and a lot of street outreach work has shifted to getting people to the shelter (in addition to traditional van outreach). This is not a specific number, but anecdotal. People saying it feels like a different environment now, a good shift in attitude from people who want to go to the shelter – it is becoming a more viable option and it feels hopeful that more people are being housed, which would increase interest in going to shelter as we move forward.

From the last report of 127 tents, it has dropped now to 46 tents. Additionally, 75 to 80 people came to warming shelter.

The HSC has had 400 intakes since November, and was down to 8 beds available for that night.

DHHS now has caseworker embedded onsite so all appointments can happen onsite. They are working to do the same with the DMV to get photo IDs as well.

As of January 10th, 3 people had been barred from the HSC (for violent offenses/significant theft).

The atmosphere is so much better than the Oxford street shelter that it is calmer, there is more space for people, and people can deescalate so they don't blow up.

There is also now a pet fostering option in place to minimize the barrier for those who are unsheltered with pets.

There was a discussion that the presence of encampments can actually increase the number of people being unsheltered.

- Over 25 years, the City had an increase of 60 people in the shelter system at one time. In 7 months, we had an increase of 300 people.
- There were a few driving factors: First, people who were situationally homeless were placed in hotels during this time (through the Covid-era Emergency Rental Assistance program). Normally, these people should have been in and out of the system and returned to housing with supports, but instead of returned to housing they stayed in hotels. The homeless system needs the outflow. This is what happened prior to COVID – but with ERA responses we kept people in hotels for 2 years without focusing on getting them into housing. So when the ERA ended, these people had become ‘entrenched’ in this homelessness and we didn’t have a plan to transition them into housing. And, we didn’t have enough affordable housing available to compound the issue.
- There was a similar context in Hennepin County, Minnesota. However, they focused on housing navigation, so when ERA ended, their hotels were empty and people had found housing. They had a 98% retention rate in that housing.
- There was a question about why it is so hard to know how many people are experiencing unsheltered homelessness right now. HMIS used to be a really strong count, but fell down when we opened the hotels, we didn’t put those people into HMIS.
- This is what the Hub Coordinators are doing. Nakesha shared the process of coordinated entry and case conferencing, and the by name list.
 - Right now, we don’t have enough resources to match with every person who is unhoused.
 - There are multiple needs – we need more housing resources, and we need more staffing. We may not need to know where people are and their individual needs, but we do need to know the total numbers.
 - Silos are breaking down – organizations aren’t keeping their numbers to themselves or their resources – it is taking time.
 - But, it feels like Portland and Hub 2 will be the one that shows the state that if we can break down the silos and share information and resources we can house more people, more quickly.
 - Lauren from the City shared an anecdote from another COC that implemented coordinated entry in 2017 – that saw it took time. It was a constant evolution of asking who needs to be at the table.

Warming Center Updates:

The warming center is now opening if it is forecasted to drop below 20 degrees at any point in a 24 hour period. It would be great if we have a way to communicate with everyone if the warming shelter is open tonight.

At the state level, there's an effort to not look at warming centers as shelter overflow – looking at creating an overflow shelter network so we can handle the ebb and flow of need.

Legislative Updates:

Cullen shared both national and state legislative updates.

National:

Housing credit improvement act – (King and Collins) – support
Case on homelessness is coming before the supreme court
Listening sessions with HUD about adding a 30 day notice

State:

Two big bills coming up –

- 1) \$10mil for emergency shelters
- 2) Reimbursing more per night, and Medicaid use toward rents

Carryover bills –

Maine Affordable Housing Coalition – bill around get historic tax credit expanded
Housing voucher system

Preble Street is providing talking points for LD 2038 and LD 2126 – with clear messaging about how and why.

Region 1 update:

Region 1 had not held a meeting since the last ESAC meeting. Nothing new to report.

Hub Report:

There are 427 people on the by name list.

The Hub has its first housing first apartment coming online soon, unit for coordinated entry case conferencing.

The PIT Count is coming up and there are a few volunteers on board. USM will be reaching out to students interested in joining. Trainings went out on Tuesday. And, there will be an FAQ on Monday, the day before PIT Count. We have warming kits to provide as well – to entice people to participate.

There are many VASH funds/vouchers available – so make sure to connect with that resource for any veterans experiencing homelessness.

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

Remote Meeting

Thursday, February 15, 2024

9:00 am – 10:00 am

Minutes

Name	Organization	Name	Organization
Adam Harr	City of Portland	Brian Townsend	Commonspace
Anne-Marie Brown	UWSM	George Rheault	Resident
Aaron Geyer	City of Portland	Ben Martineau	HVJ
Eric brewer	HVJ	Mike Guthrie	City of Portland
Cullen Ryan	CHOM	Terrence Miller	Preble Street
Stephanie Gilbert	DA Office	Lauren bower	City of Portland
Kirk Carlsen	Milestone Recovery	Briana Costello	Maine Medical Center

Meeting Summary

The ESG budget was presented and there will be public comment on March 18th and April 1, 2024 at the City Council. During the statistics, the group discussed exploring getting the deduplicated number of people with CTOs and who truly has no shelter eligibility as a result, adding data/ a slide for the warming centers, and adding 166 Riverside to the statistics. 166 is for asylum seekers and HSC is for anyone, prioritizing the unsheltered. January was the first month that the city did not see a fatal overdose in two and a half years; HSC administered 38 doses of Narcan in January.

Introductions

- Brian moved to approve the December meeting minutes, Taylor seconded and the minutes were approved. The January and February minutes will be reviewed at the March meeting.
- Jenny Stasio could not attend to give the Region 1 update.

January Emergency Shelter Statistics

- Kristin Jenkins reached out for the lakes region shelter they are exploring.

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

- South Portland has a lot of intakes this month at 13 This is a perennial issue on the Mills budget discussed next week; it would be helpful in the legislation side to show how many other towns are utilizing Portland shelters.
- Update the HSC HIC to 258 with the temporary increase.
- Add the capacity of the warming centers that we know of; what is the capacity to actually be inside.
 - Separate slide for warming center.
- New developments have come online; is there tracking of those new developments such as 22 park avenue.
 - That info would be on coordinated entry but it is unclear how granular that info is. How to track and report those data.
 - 22 people from LTS moved into Phoenix Flats.
 - The CE BNL should give us more info as it is established
- How do we want to include 166 Riverside?
 - 166 is full; are Asylees being turned away? (Continued in lower agenda item.)
- Add based on self reporting on the intake residency slide.
- The physical space creates less conflict at the HSC vs OSS.
- Are the warming center serving the 28* individuals with CTOs?
 - There are 28 active CTOs but multiple of those CTOs could be for one person.
 - Is the neighborhood prosecutor able say if if the CTOs span multiple shelters for one person to get the individual number?
- Ashlea's place was created to serve the hardest to house.
- The teen shelter is looking for the THUD bill for renovating the teen shelter. That renovation was approved 2 years ago.
- Re-label FSWC on nighty count slide as the hotels for Through These Doors.

ESG

- HUD has not made a final allocation so the budget is based on last years level.
- Public comment will be on March 18th and April 1, 2024 at the City Council
- Hoping HUD will include actual budget but if not the figures will go up or down accordingly.
- There is one RRH person at the HSC.
- The budget covers life skills, tenant workshops, and RRH at HSC.

166 Riverside Shelter and HSC Capacity

- 166 is for asylum seekers and HSC is for anyone, prioritizing the unsheltered.
- The Housing Inventory group of the ECRT decided to prioritize the truly unsheltered.
- The provider group on Monday concurred that there is not a group of asylum seekers that are unsheltered.
 - There was frustration that it took 4 hours over WhatsApp for providers to find places for asylum seekers to stay.

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

- The people that are sleeping outside do not have a WhatsApp network to find shelter and must sleep outside.
- We have moved the curfew to 9:00 PM and now to 11:00 PM which is how the HSC ends up with beds open.
- The living room will send people to the HSC up until 11:00 PM.
 - Henry and Megan have worked out that people can be sent to the living room and from there will be taken to the HSC.
- We need federal resources.
- “Check-in” is in the morning for people to let staff know they still plan to stay at the HSC at that night. You know you have a bed at the end of the day by doing check-in 4AM to 9AM.
- We send an emails at 9:00 AM with bed availability and then another at 6PM.
- If asylum seekers were sleeping outside, they would be welcomed into the shelter like anyone else.
- The Warming Center at 425 Congress is still available when it is opened.
 - They are funded through the end of March.
 - It was opened last night and on Saturday.
- This policy creates capacity for people outside. Asylees moving into the HSC led the shelter from serving 1,700 people annually down to 1,000; this policy helps us meet the needs of more people.
 - Leaving some beds open will allow us to serve more people over time.
 - This also allows for PD to drop people off in the night during snow storms.
- January was the first month that the city did not see a fatal overdose in two and a half years.
 - HSC administered 38 doses of Narcan in January.
 - If someone has a fatal overdose in the county jail, does that count as a Portland fatal overdose?
 - It would be reported via emergency services.
- We provided the numbers to Senator King's office from the United Way. Overall since 2022, this region has received \$7,509,758.02 in EFSP Humanitarian Aid funding, supporting ten agencies providing services in Southern Maine. The overall breakdown by Fiscal Year is:
 - FY 2022 = \$2,855,842.49
 - FY 2023 = \$3,614,857.53
 - FY 2024 = \$1,039,058.00
 - Highlighting the sharp decline of funding in critical funding
- We are operating at an emergency capacity of 258 above the 208 capacity.
- From a hospital perspective 166 has been very helpful to not keep people in hospital when it was not medically necessary nor discharge to unsheltered homelessness.

HUB 2

- 537 participants on the BNL

Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee

- Case conferencing had their first housing on January 29th with 4 more units coming online for them soon.
- Maine State Prison raised \$12,000 to support unsheltered people in Portland and made 650 warming kits to 14 organizations.
- South Portland housing navigator is online and SoPo is the first community outside of Portland to join HUB 2 CE.
- HUB partners have joined to apply for a grant.

Legislative Update

- Federal
 - Waiting for congress to sign funding bill.
- State
 - Mills supplemental budget includes 16 million
 - 10 million for low barrier shelters.

DRAFT

PORTLAND HOMELESS SHELTERS

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

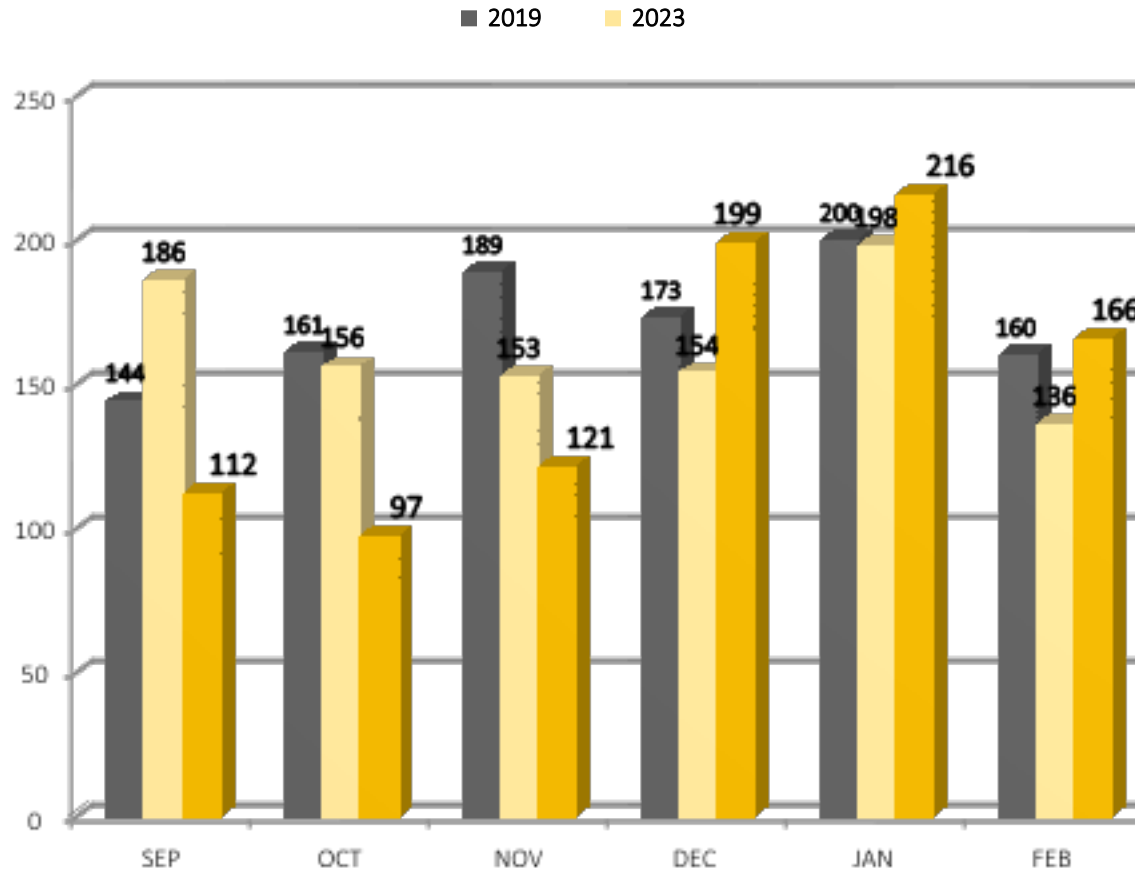
	February, 2023	February, 2024
ADOLESCENTS	21 Individuals	17 Individuals
FAMILIES	174 Individuals 64 Average Families	128 Individuals 43 Average Families
ADULTS	322 Individuals	349 Individuals
Total	518 Individuals	494 Individuals

HOMELESS SERVICES CENTER FEBRUARY, 2024 Intakes by Residency

*Because people are entering the country in other communities then relocating here, what would be considered out of country intakes are captured as out of state.

MAINE TOWN							OUT-OF-STATE			*OUT-OF-COUNTRY		
Auburn	2	Lewiston	4	Springvale	1		CO	1				
Augusta	2	Monroe	1	Standish	1		CT	1				
Bath	2	Naples	3	Topsham	1		FL	1				
Berwick	1	Norway	1	Warren	1		MA	1				
Biddeford	1	Old Orchard Beach	3	Wells	1		ND	1				
Bridgton	1	Orono	1	Westbrook	2		NH	4				
Casco	1	Rumford	2	Windham	2		NM	1				
Mechanic Falls	1	Saco	1	Wiscasset	1		NV	1				
Conner Township	1	South Berwick	1	Yarmouth	1		OR	1				
Damariscotta	1	South Paris	1				VT	1				
Gorham	3	South Portland	3									

PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE FEBRUARY, 2024 SHELTER INTAKES BY MONTH

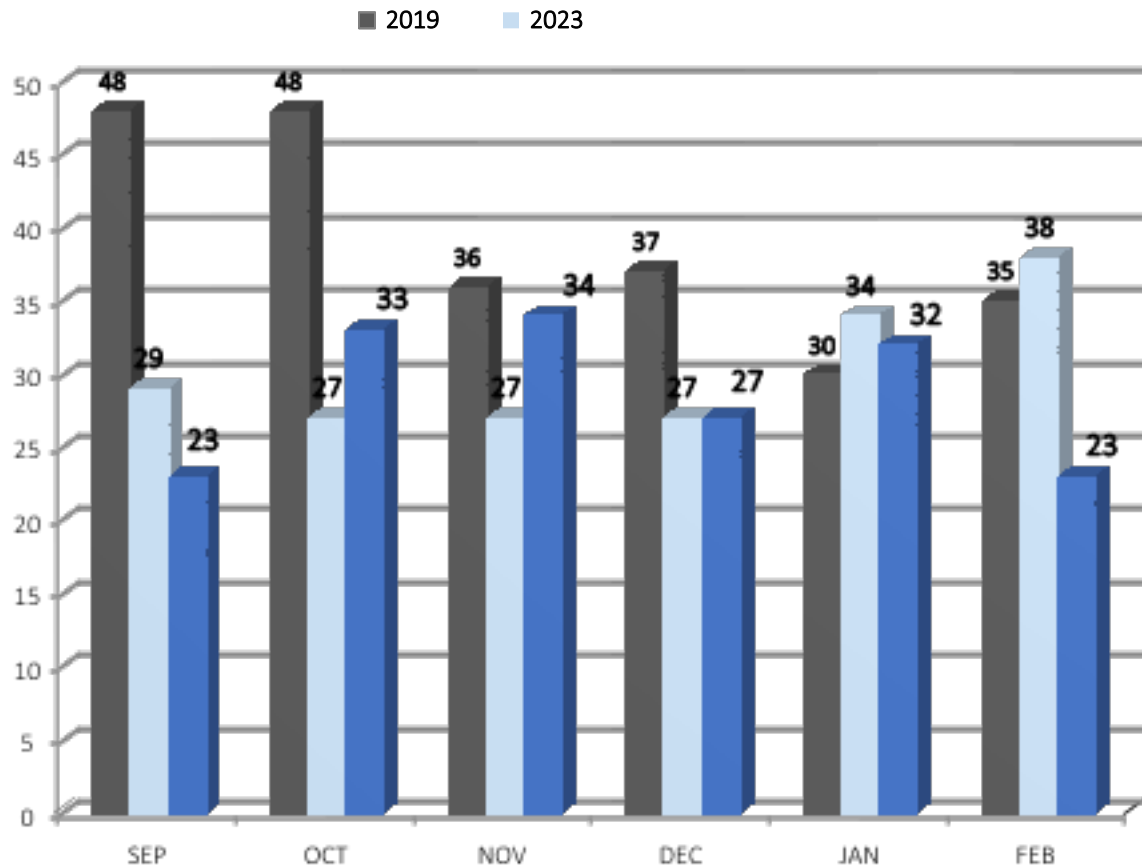


* NOTE: this and the next two slides compare the current year, last year, and the last year before the pandemic.

* * All new intakes were unsheltered.

	INTAKES	Current Bed Capacity
Through These Doors	7 / 7	16+ at shelter and hotel overflow
Family Shelter	17/62	146
Joe Kreisler**	7	24
Milestone	19	36
HSC (Men)	68	208 + 50 temporary beds
HSC(Women)	24	
Florence House	19	25 at Shelter, 15 at Safe Haven
Elena's Way**	5	40
TOTAL	166	560+

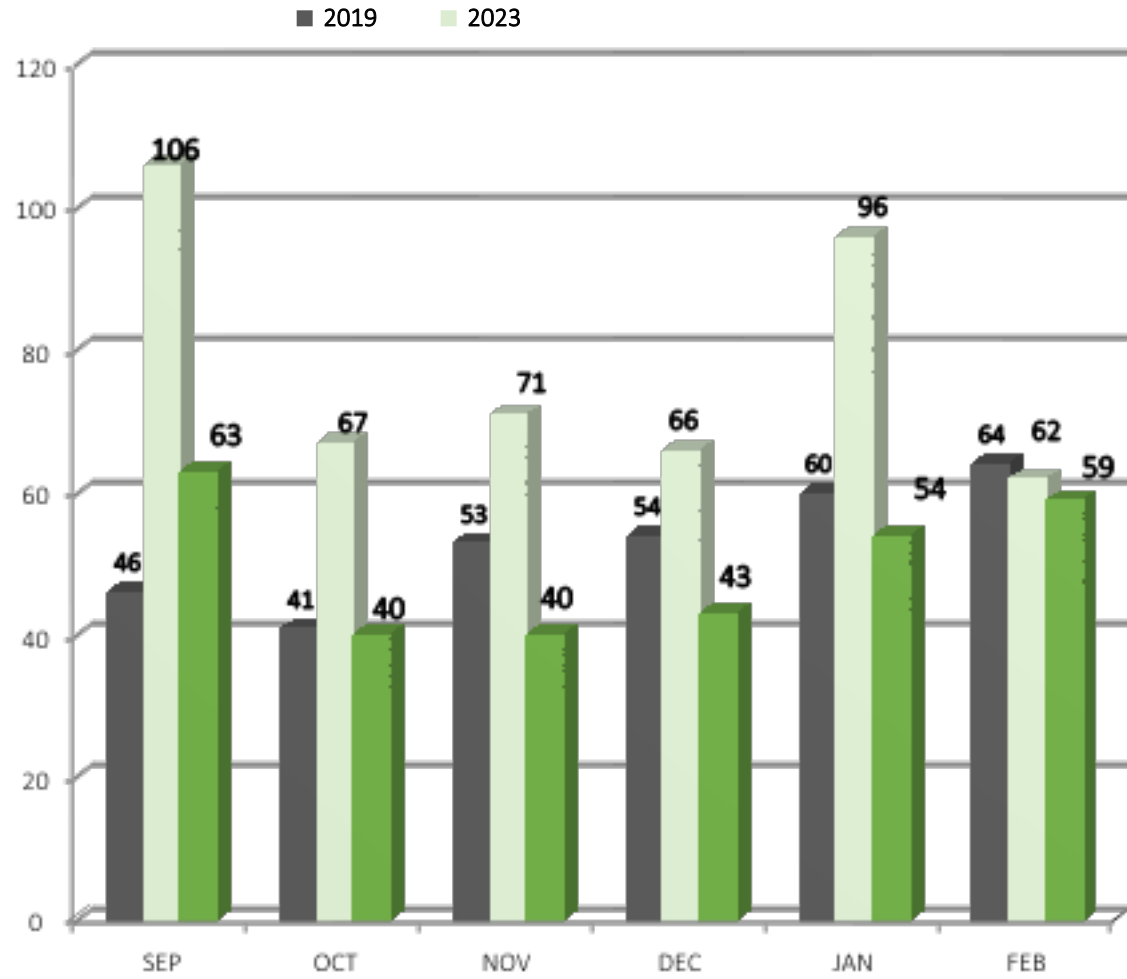
PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE FEBRUARY, 2024 HOUSING PLACEMENTS BY MONTH



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

	TOTAL HOUSING PLACEMENTS	BED NIGHTS	TEMPORARY	PERMANENT
Through These Doors	3 / 11	1,575		3 / 11
Family Shelter	6 / 19	4,763		6 / 19
Joe Kreisler	2	79	1	1
Milestone	1	71		1
HSC (Men)	4	400		4
HSC (Women)	1	147		1
Florence House	4	529	1	3
Elena's Way	2	691		2
TOTAL	23		2	21

PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE FEBRUARY, 2024 1st TIME HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS (BASED ON SELF-REPORTING)

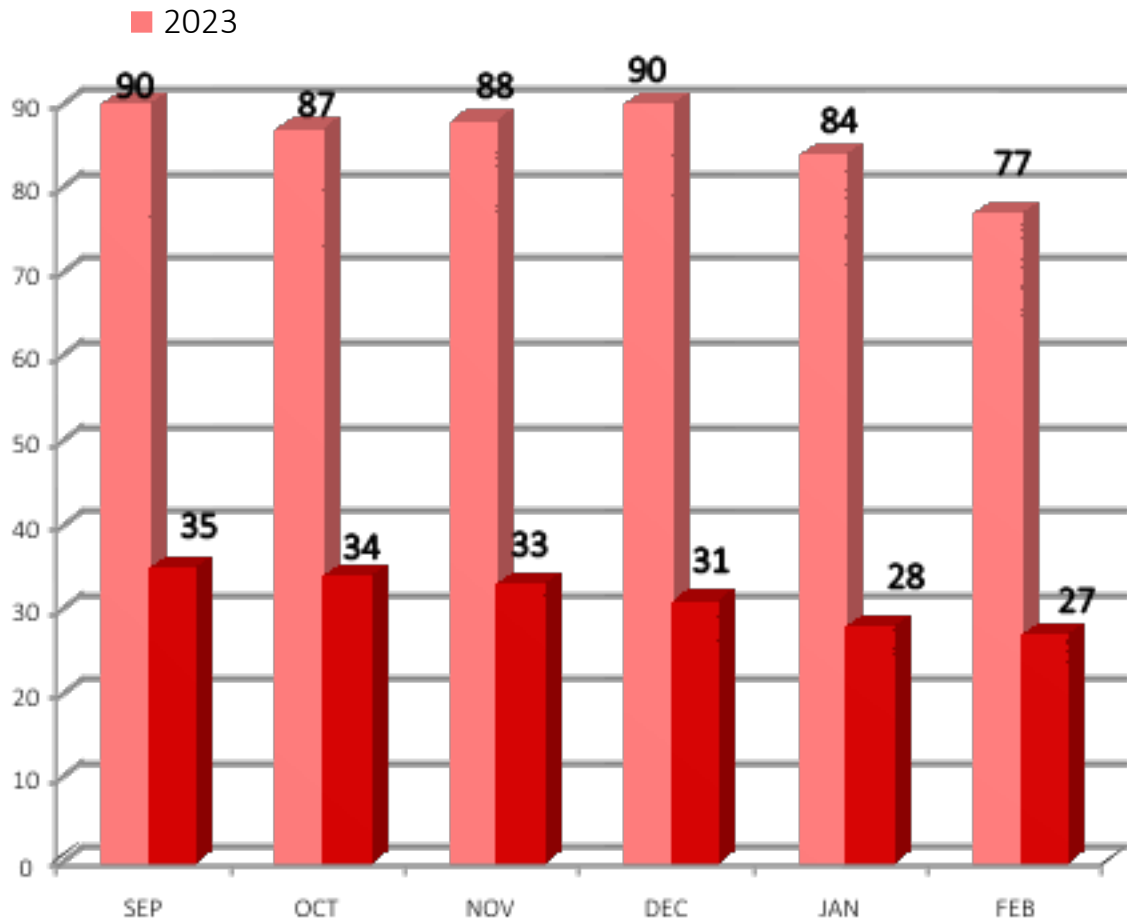


1 ST TIME HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS	All Intakes	1 st Time Homeless Intakes	% of the Shelter's Intakes	% of All Intake	% of Portland First Time Homeless Intakes
Through These Doors	7/7	0	-	-	-
Family Shelter	17/62	15/56	88%	10%	25%
Joe Kreisler	7	5	71%	4%	8%
Milestone	19	10	53%	11%	17%
HSC (Men)	68	17	25%	41%	29%
HSC (Women)	24	6	25%	14%	10%
Florence House	19	6	32%	11%	10%
Elena's Way	5	0	-	-	-
TOTAL	166	59		36%	

PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE FEBRUARY, 2024 CTOs FROM SHELTER

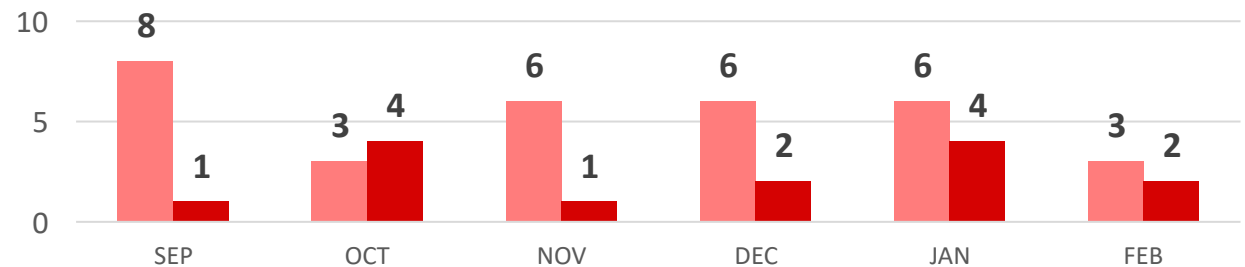
*CTOs from the former Oxford Street Shelter carried over as restrictions with the same end date as the CTOs issued for the OSS shelter address and are included in this number. Anyone restricted from the HSC can ask to speak to management to request lifting the restriction.

Total Current Criminal Trespass Orders



CTO STATISTICS	CTOs in the Month	Medical Restrictions in Month	Current CTOs
Family Shelter	0		0
Joe Kreisler	0		3
Milestone	0		10
HSC*	2		11
Florence House	0		3
Elena's Way	0		0
TOTAL	2		27

CTOs Issued in the Month



PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE FEBRUARY, 2024

HOUSING PLACEMENTS BY TYPE

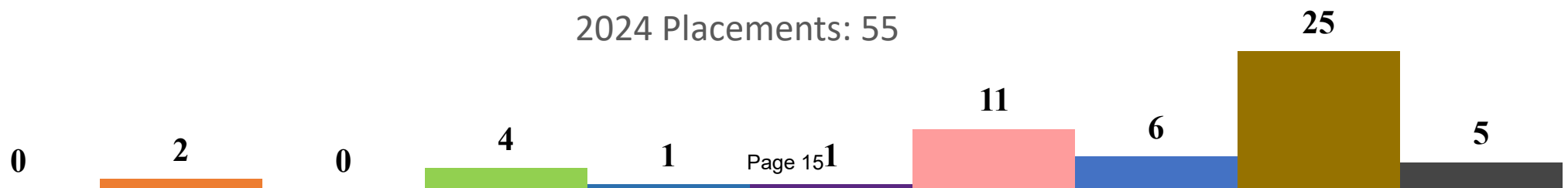
	S+C	BRAP	Recovery Home	Housing Project/PSH	STEP	Family Reunification	Sect. 8/HCV	OTHER*	GA	No Subsidy
Through These Doors				1			1	1		
Family Shelter									4	2
Joe Kreisler								1	1	
Milestone								1		
HSC (Men)				1		1	1		1	
HSC (Women)				1						
Florence House							3	1		
Elena's Way		1								1
TOTAL		1		3		1	5	4	6	3

*Rapid Re-Housing, Transitional Housing, Jobcorps

Distribution of Placements in the Month: 23



2024 Placements: 55



PORTLAND, CITY-WIDE FEBRUARY, 2024 SHELTER COUNT BY NIGHT

On February: 29

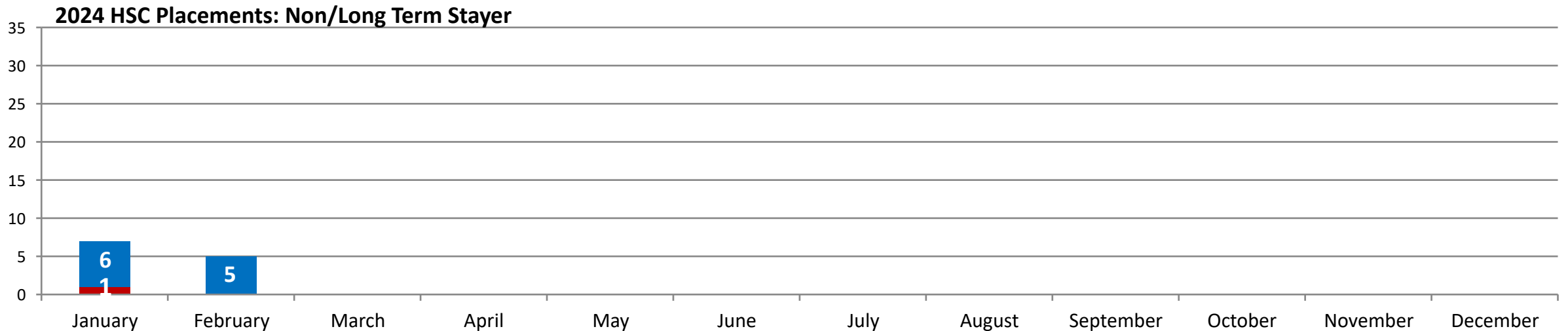
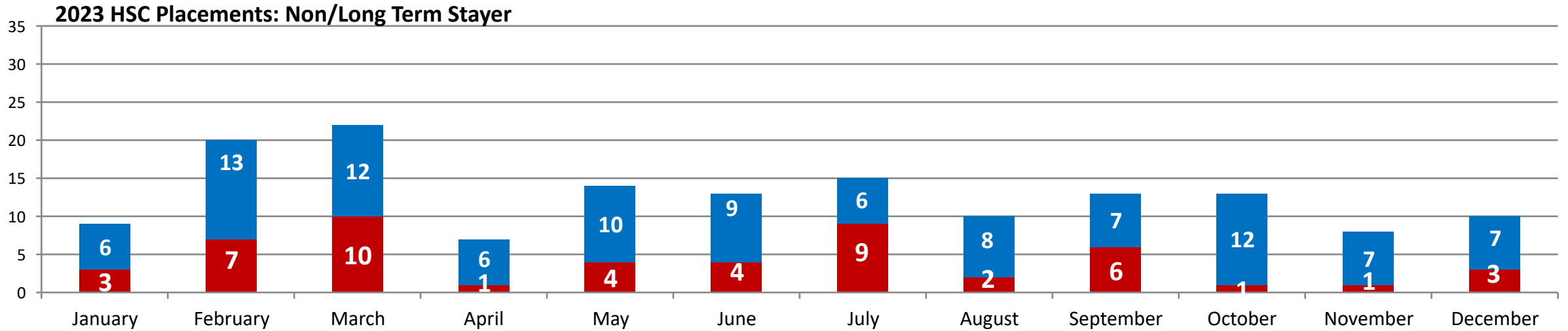
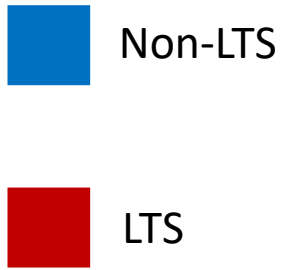
527 individuals

(including families)

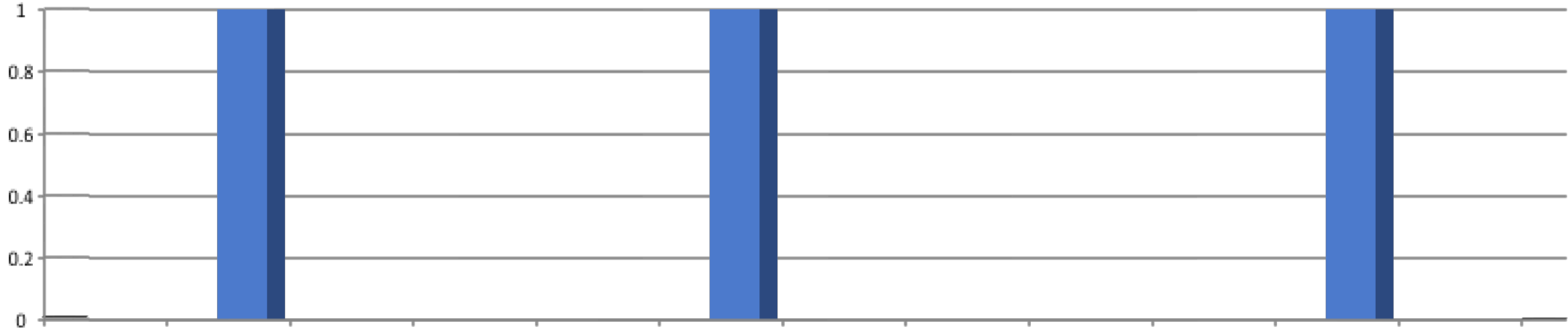
were utilizing shelter services in
Portland

Calendar Day	Through These Doors	Family Shelter	Florence House	Joe Kreisler	Milestone	HSC Beds	TTD Hotels	Elena's Way	Total Bed Nights
1	17	88	32	18	35	238	4	40	472
2	17	88	31	17	36	230	4	40	463
3	17	88	33	13	30	226	4	40	451
4	17	88	33	17	36	225	4	40	460
5	17	84	36	16	35	224	0	40	452
6	13	84	34	18	38	229	0	40	456
7	14	89	38	17	37	232	0	40	467
8	15	96	40	16	34	234	0	38	473
9	16	103	40	15	36	233	0	38	481
10	16	103	39	15	36	226	0	38	473
11	13	103	39	14	38	233	0	38	478
12	13	108	40	19	36	227	0	37	480
13	14	114	40	16	37	230	0	37	488
14	16	114	40	16	37	241	0	39	503
15	16	118	41	19	40	243	0	39	516
16	16	123	40	17	38	245	0	39	518
17	16	121	39	16	36	239	0	39	506
18	15	121	41	19	36	238	0	39	509
19	15	121	41	18	37	236	0	39	507
20	16	125	40	17	36	241	0	38	513
21	16	130	38	16	37	240	0	38	515
22	16	130	38	17	37	247	0	39	524
23	16	125	38	16	35	249	0	39	518
24	16	125	37	17	31	242	0	39	507
25	16	125	38	17	38	241	0	39	514
26	16	127	38	19	32	243	0	40	515
27	16	129	40	20	33	242	0	40	520
28	16	129	40	19	34	247	0	40	525
29	16	135	40	21	32	243	0	40	527
Total	453	3,234	1,104	495	1,033	6,864	16	1,132	14,331
Avg/night	16	112	38	17	36	237	1	39	494
Highest	17	135	41	21	40	249	4	40	527
Lowest	13	84	31	13	30	224	0	37	451

HOMELESS SERVICES CENTER & COMMUNITY OVERFLOW HOUSING PLACEMENT DATA



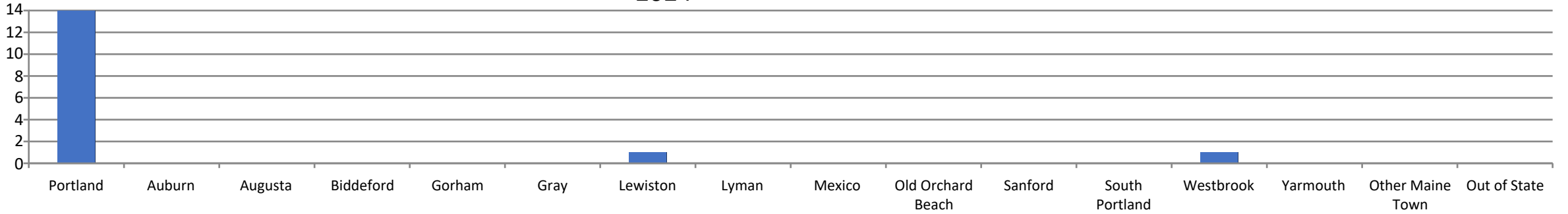
HOMELESS SERVICES CENTER PERMANENT AND TRANSITIONAL 2024 HOUSING PLACEMENT DATA



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	%
TOTAL HOUSING PLACEMENTS	7	5											12	100%
Portland	6	3											9	75.0%
Auburn														0.0%
Biddeford	1												1	8.3%
Brunswick														0.0%
Gorham														0.0%
Lewiston														0.0%
Sanford		1											1	8.3%
South Portland														0.0%
Westbrook														0.0%
Other Maine Towns														0.0%
Reunification with friends/family in another Maine town*														0.0%
Reunification with friends/family in another state*		1											1	8.3%

FAMILY SHELTER PERMANENT AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PLACEMENT DATA

■ 2024



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	TOTAL	100%
TOTAL HOUSING PLACEMENTS	10	6											16	
Portland	9	5											14	88%
Auburn														0%
Augusta														0%
Biddeford														0%
Gorham														0%
Gray														0%
Lewiston	1												1	6%
Lyman														0%
Mexico														0%
Old Orchard Beach														0%
Sanford														0%
South Portland														0%
Westbrook		1											1	6%
Yarmouth														0%
Other Maine Town														0%
Out of State														0%

Federal Legislation Update

BUDGET & FUNDING-RELATED ITEMS - Updates

➔ **Tax Package – Update** – The House passed its tax package, the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024 (H.R. 7024), at the end of January. The bill now faces a full vote in the Senate. The tax bill includes provisions to expand the Child Tax Credit (CTC), as well as top two top legislative priorities related to affordable housing (also included in the bipartisan Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act that has widespread bipartisan support). The tax bill would do the following for affordable housing:

- Restore the 12.5 percent allocation increase for nine percent LIHTCs for 2023 to 2025; and
- Lower the 50 percent bond financing test to 30 percent for 2024 to 2025.

➔ **FY 24 Budget – Update** – On 2/29, Congress passed, and the President signed, another short-term continuing resolution (CR) to extend federal funding for THUD through 3/8. To avoid passing a large, 12-bill appropriations deal, Congress will instead move the 12 bills in two separate waves: the first six bills (including THUD) will expire on 3/8, while the remaining six bills will expire on 3/22. Congress is likely to pass multiple mini-bus spending bills (vs. one large omnibus bill).

➔ **FY 24 THUD Budget – Update** – On 3/3, congressional leaders released a final FY24 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) spending bill that provides significant funding for HUD’s vital affordable housing and homelessness programs. Overall, the final spending bill provides HUD programs with \$70 billion, which is \$8.3 billion more than FY23-enacted levels.

The final spending bill provides significant resources for the **Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, which was funded at \$32.4 billion, or a \$2.1 billion increase over FY23-enacted levels.** This funding level is higher than the levels proposed in either the House or Senate versions, which could have led to a loss of 80,000 to 112,000 housing vouchers, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. As a result of the higher funding level, there should be sufficient resources to renew all existing rental assistance contracts and expand rental assistance to an additional 3,000 households.

The bill also provides increased or level resources for:

- \$4.05 billion for the Homeless Assistance Grants program (\$418 million increase in funding from FY23-enacted levels).
- \$3.41 billion for the Public Housing Capital Fund (\$30 million compared to last year’s levels), and \$5.5 billion for the Public Housing Operating Fund (\$367 million more than in FY23).
- \$16 billion for PBS8 (\$1.1 billion increase from FY 23).

The bill provides level funding for:

- \$505 million for Housing for Persons with AIDs (HOPWA).
- \$86 million for Fair Housing programs.
- \$57.5 million for Housing Counseling.
- \$22 million for Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grants.
- \$20 million for the Eviction Prevention Grant program.

The bill provides decreased funding for:

- \$1.25 billion for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (a \$250 million cut).
- \$75 million for Choice Neighborhoods (a \$275 million cut).
- \$913 million for Section 202 Housing for the Elderly (a \$162 million cut).
- \$208 million for Section 811 Housing for Persons with Disabilities (a \$152 million cut).
- \$119 million for Policy Development and Research (a \$26 million cut).
- \$345 million for Healthy Homes (a \$65 million cut).

BILLS – Updates

➔ **Farm Bill – Update** – At a House Agriculture Committee hearing on 2/14/24, Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA) proposed a funding framework for the Farm Bill that included a \$30 billion cut in SNAP benefits over 10 years. SNAP is the most effective tool for addressing food insecurity in the nation. Per CBPP, “this proposal would limit USDA’s future adjustments to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP), which is used to set SNAP benefits, to account only for food price inflation. The TFP is a set of foods that is supposed to represent a frugal but nutritionally adequate diet. A bipartisan directive in the most recent farm bill, enacted in 2018, requires USDA to periodically reevaluate the TFP to account for factors other than food price inflation, including changes in dietary guidance and food consumption patterns. This directive led USDA to make a substantial TFP adjustment in 2021, making up for five decades of deferred adjustments, through a science-driven process.” Though per the Chairman, average benefits would still rise each year with food price inflation that would be the only adjustment. Per CBPP “Over time, the scientific evidence on healthy diets evolves and costs may go up for reasons other than inflation. If Congress limits future updates to cover inflation only, that’s a benefit cut, as reflected in the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office cost estimate.”

HR 6696 / S 3463 Eviction Prevention Act – No New Update – On 12/11 Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced the “[Eviction Prevention Act](#)” ([H.R.6696](#), [S.3463](#)) in the House and Senate, respectively. The bill would authorize new grants to provide legal representation to tenants, create the country’s first federal evictions database, and mandate a government report on evictions in the U.S.


➔ **S 2932 Housing ACCESS Act – No New Update** – On 9/26 Senator Markey introduced the Housing ACCESS Act, which would align housing and services resources and address the barriers providers face when seeking Medicaid reimbursement for housing-related

services and support. It also requires a national study to determine rates that allow providers to pay living wages, reduce staff turnover, and ensure evidence-based case ratios. A companion bill is expected in the House.

Farm Bill – No New Update– The US Farm Bill is a critical piece of legislation that sets agricultural policies nationwide for the next five years. The Farm Bill offers an opportunity to expand/enhance SNAP benefits for low-income households across the country. Some lawmakers wish to make changes to SNAP through the Farm bill which would reduce eligibility for and availability of SNAP benefits for households.

HR 5221 Homeless Children and Youth Act – No New Update – 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 2701/HR 5254 Housing for All Act of 2023 – No New Update – Introduced by Senator Alex Padilla on 7/27 in the Senate (and by Rep Ted Lieu in the House on 8/22), this bill would address the homelessness and housing crises, moving towards the goal of providing for a home for all Americans.

 **S 1557/ HR 3238 The Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act – No New Update** – Senators Collins and 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 – *This bill passed the House on 12/5 and was sent to the Senate for consideration.* 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.

S 1257 / HR 3776, 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 680 / HR 6970 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. On 1/11/24, Representatives Val Hoyle (D-OR) and Salud Carbajal (D-CA) introduced a companion bill in the House. 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.

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

Supreme Court Case Re. Homelessness – No new update – The U.S. Supreme Court announced on 1/12 that it will hear [Johnson v. City of Grants Pass](#), a case that will determine whether people experiencing homelessness have a constitutional right to camp on public property when they do not have a place to sleep. The Supreme Court will decide whether laws regulating camping on public property constitute “cruel and unusual punishment” prohibited by the Eighth Amendment.

Proposed Rule to Provide 30-Day Notice before Initiating Eviction Proceedings for Non-Payment of Rent – No new update – HUD will hold a listening session for tenants regarding a [proposed rule](#) that would require a public housing agency (PHA) or owner of a property assisted with Project-Based Rental Assistance (PBRA) to provide a 30-day notice to a household before starting a formal judicial eviction procedure to terminate a lease for non-payment of rent. The listening session is scheduled for 12:30 pm ET on January 23. Register for the session [here](#).

State Update: Please see the [Bill Tracking document for the State legislature Update](#).

USEFUL LINKS

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

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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 2214	Governor’s Bill	An Act Making Unified Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025 (aka Supplemental Budget)	Public Hearing 2/23/24 - Part GG and Part HH - AFA Committee Public Hearing 2/26/24 - Part OO Work Session 3/7/24	The Governor released her Supplemental Budget. Part A ; Part B ; General Fund Bill Language . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PART FF: 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 • PART GG: Transfers \$10,000,000 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Maine State Housing Authority for new housing units through the Affordable Homeownership program • PART HH: \$16 million for the Emergency Housing Relief Fund (one-time funding): Emergency Housing Relief Fund Program, Other Special Revenue Funds account to supplement or establish programs addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness or facing other immediate housing needs, and support other uses that address housing emergencies in the State, such as through privately-operated low barrier shelter, winter warming shelters, legal services, and other wraparound settlement supports intended to help individuals integrate into Maine’s workforce and communities to ensure that winter warming shelters, lower barrier shelters, longer term shelters and transitional housing programs can remain open, operating, and supporting the emergency housing needs of Maine people. -Part A specifies this is one-time funding. • Part OO: This Part requires the transfer of \$5,000,000 on or before June 30, 2025 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human

				Services, General Assistance – Reimbursement to Cities and Towns program, Other Special Revenue Funds account for funding General Assistance payments to cities and towns.
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 Enacted – CARRIED OVER	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 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 DHHS to support the program.
LD 2136 ★	Rep A Mastraccio	An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelters for Unhoused Individuals	Public Hearing, Tuesday 1/23/24; Work Session 1/30/24 and 2/20/24 – Housing Committee – OTP-AM unanimous of all present	This bill, as amended by the Committee, provides ongoing funds for homeless shelters – allocating \$10 million beginning next fiscal year, and \$2.5 million for low-barrier shelters. The Committee amendment makes the bill an emergency and adds a Legislative Study.
LD 2146	Rep. G Lookner	An Act to Prohibit Certain Municipalities from Adopting Moratoria on Emergency Shelters	House Passed to be Engrossed by Committee Amendment A on 2/22; the Senate accepted the Minority Ought Not to Pass Report - sent back to the House.	This bill prohibits municipalities with populations exceeding 30,000 people from adopting moratoria on the establishment of emergency shelters that provide temporary shelter for persons experiencing homelessness.
SERVICE BILLS				
Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 1975	Rep. Lydia Crafts	An Act to Implement a Statewide Public Health Response to Substance Use and Amend the Laws Governing Scheduled Drugs	Public hearing held 1/17/24; Work Session 3/6/24	This bill establishes the Substance Use, Health and Safety Fund in the Department of Health and Human Services. Money deposited in the fund must be used by the department to oversee, approve and provide grants and funding to agencies, organizations and service providers, including the federally recognized Indian tribes in this State and service providers that are affiliated with federally recognized Indian tribes in this State, to increase voluntary access to community care for persons who need services related to substance use, as set forth in the bill. By June 30, 2024, and annually thereafter, the Legislature must appropriate to the fund an amount sufficient to fully fund the services as set forth in the bill. The bill repeals the laws that make possession of a schedule W, X, Y or Z drug

				and use of drug paraphernalia a crime. It also repeals the laws governing the civil violation of use of drug paraphernalia and possession with intent to use drug paraphernalia.
HOUSING/RENTAL ASSISTANCE BILLS				
Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
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 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 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.
LD 1710	Rep. Cheryl Golek	An Act to Establish the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program and Amend the Laws Regarding Tenants and the Municipal General Assistance Program	Public Hearing on 5/12; Work Session 5/26; Work Session 5/30; Work Session 2/13/24 – Housing Committee – OTP-AM	Sponsor Amendment amends the bill as follows: This amendment replaces the bill. This amendment requires the Maine State Housing Authority to establish and administer the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program. The program must include a rental assistance component to assist individuals with the cost of rent and a rental guarantee component to encourage landlords to work with the program and other rental assistance programs in the State. The amendment also creates the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program Fund under the Maine State Housing Authority to carry out the program. The bill appropriates \$16,000,000 of ongoing funds annually. The amendment makes it an unfair trade practice for a landlord to refuse to participate in a federal, state or local tenant-based rental assistance program.
LD 2106 ★	Sen. M Rotundo	An Act to Accelerate the Production of Housing and Strengthen the Maine Historic Property Rehabilitation Tax Credit	Public Hearing 1/24/24; Work Session 2/13 – Taxation	This bill increases the maximum tax credit allowed for certified historic property rehabilitation projects. It also allows nonprofit organizations that claim the historic preservation tax credit or the affordable housing tax credit to file their refund claims on a calendar year basis. The

Committee – Divided Report

changes in the bill apply to tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2024.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE & SAFETY NET BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
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 1732	Rep. Michele Meyer	An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program	1/30/24 Work Session – HHS Committee – Voted OTP-AM	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 the delivery of trauma-informed and culturally and linguistically appropriate services, written decisions and a database.

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.

BILLS THAT ARE NOW DEAD

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
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LD 2138	Rep C Madigan	An Act to Improve Funding for Homeless Shelters	This bill is now DEAD (instead incorporated in LD 2136 above)	This resolve, as amended by the Sponsor, provides ongoing funds for low-barrier homeless shelters – allocating \$2.5 million beginning next fiscal year.
LD 1426	Rep. Kristi Mathieson	An Act to Secure Housing for the Most Vulnerable Maine Residents by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal General Assistance	This bill is now DEAD	<p>This bill:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requires an overseer, no later than the 120th day following appointment or election, to complete training on the requirements of the municipal GA program; 2. 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; 3. 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; 4. Increases from 70% to 90% the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of GA incurred by a municipality and each Indian tribe; 5. Directs DHHS to reimburse each municipality for 5% of the direct costs of paying benefits incurred through GA program; 6. Directs DHHS to establish and provide overseers with access to a statewide database for tracking applicants for the GA program and expenses relating to the program; and 7. Requires DHHS to provide assistance to municipalities with regard to processing applications for the GA 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
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	This bill is now DEAD	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.

131ST LEGISLATURE SECOND REGULAR SESSION BILL TRACKING

The Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature begins January 3, 2024. Statutory adjournment is April 17, 2024.

USEFUL LINKS

- Maine Legislature Homepage: <http://legislature.maine.gov/>
- Maine Legislature YouTube Channels for Legislative Committees: <https://www.youtube.com/mainestatelegislature>
- Sign up to Testify and/or submit testimony here: <https://www.mainelegislature.org/testimony/>

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BILLS

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 2214	Governor’s Bill	An Act Making Unified Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025 (aka Supplemental Budget)	<p>Public Hearing 2/23/24 - Part GG and Part HH - AFA Committee</p> <p>Public Hearing 2/26/24 - Part OO</p> <p>Work Session 3/7/24</p>	<p>The Governor released her Supplemental Budget. Part A; Part B; General Fund Bill Language.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PART FF: 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 • PART GG: Transfers \$10,000,000 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Maine State Housing Authority for new housing units through the Affordable Homeownership program • PART HH: \$16 million for the Emergency Housing Relief Fund (one-time funding): Emergency Housing Relief Fund Program, Other Special Revenue Funds account to supplement or establish programs addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness or facing other immediate housing needs, and support other uses that address housing emergencies in the State, such as through privately-operated low barrier shelter, winter warming shelters, legal services, and other wraparound settlement supports intended to help individuals integrate into Maine’s workforce and communities to ensure that winter warming shelters, lower barrier shelters, longer term shelters and transitional housing programs can remain open, operating, and supporting the emergency housing needs of Maine people. -Part A specifies this is one-time funding.

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Part 00: This Part requires the transfer of \$5,000,000 on or before June 30, 2025 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Department of Health and Human Services, General Assistance – Reimbursement to Cities and Towns program, Other Special Revenue Funds account for funding General Assistance payments to cities and towns.
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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 Enacted – CARRIED OVER	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 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 2136 ★	Rep A Mastraccio	An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelters for Unhoused Individuals	Public Hearing, Tuesday 1/23/24; Work Session 1/30/24 and 2/20/24 – Housing Committee – OTP-AM unanimous of all present	This bill, as amended by the Committee, provides ongoing funds for homeless shelters – allocating \$10 million beginning next fiscal year, and \$2.5 million for low-barrier shelters. The Committee amendment makes the bill an emergency and adds a Legislative Study.
LD 2146	Rep. G Lookner	An Act to Prohibit Certain Municipalities from Adopting Moratoria on Emergency Shelters	House Passed to be Engrossed by Committee Amendment A on 2/22; the Senate accepted the Minority Ought Not to Pass Report - sent back to the House.	This bill prohibits municipalities with populations exceeding 30,000 people from adopting moratoria on the establishment of emergency shelters that provide temporary shelter for persons experiencing homelessness.

SERVICE BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 540	Rep. Melanie Sachs	An Act to Establish Peer Respite Centers for Adults with Mental Health Challenges in Maine	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill requires the department to establish through contracts 2 peer respite centers in the State for persons 18 years of age or older. The centers must provide 24-hour intentional peer support to persons in need of mental health services on a voluntary, short-term basis.


LD 599	Rep. Michael Brennan	An Act to Provide Support Services for a Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Persons	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill provides ongoing funding for support services for a transitional housing program in Portland.
LD 1975	Rep. Lydia Crafts	An Act to Implement a Statewide Public Health Response to Substance Use and Amend the Laws Governing Scheduled Drugs	Public hearing held 1/17/24;	This bill establishes the Substance Use, Health and Safety Fund in the Department of Health and Human Services. Money deposited in the fund must be used by the department to oversee, approve and provide grants and funding to agencies, organizations and service providers, including the federally recognized Indian tribes in this State and service providers that are affiliated with federally recognized Indian tribes in this State, to increase voluntary access to community care for persons who need services related to substance use, as set forth in the bill. By June 30, 2024, and annually thereafter, the Legislature must appropriate to the fund an amount sufficient to fully fund the services as set forth in the bill. The bill repeals the laws that make possession of a schedule W, X, Y or Z drug and use of drug paraphernalia a crime. It also repeals the laws governing the civil violation of use of drug paraphernalia and possession with intent to use drug paraphernalia.
LD 2082	Sen. R Bennett	An Act to Ensure the Financial Stability of Behavioral Health Service and Housing Providers	Public Hearing 1/24/24; Work Session 2/6/24 and 3/6/24 – HHS Committee	This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to pay administrative expenses and interest charged on lines of credit or loans accessed by behavioral health services providers and housing assistance providers when a delay in department contract award, finalization or payments requires the provider to access the line of credit or loan.
LD 2237	Speaker R Talbot Ross	An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources	Public Hearing 3/4/24 – HHS Committee	<p>This bill includes parts A-F. Click here for the full bill text. Relevant parts are below.</p> <p>This bill enacts provisions to improve mental health crisis response services and to reduce violence, including gun violence.</p> <p>Part A provides funding to strengthen and expand mental health crisis intervention mobile response services in order to provide services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide for the incorporation of specific types of mental health and crisis intervention experts into the existing crisis services response system. It also provides funding for ancillary services for mobile response services, including necessary travel and telephone conferences with clients. Part A also requires the Department of Health and Human Services, by January 30, 2025, in coordination with the Department of Public Safety, to ensure the coordination of services under the State's E-9-1-1 system and the State's 9-8-8 mobile crisis services system. By January 30, 2026, the Department of Health and Human Services must submit a status report related to the</p>

				<p>coordination of services, including suggested legislation, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters, and the joint standing committee may submit a bill relating to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.</p> <p>Part B directs the Department of Health and Human Services to establish crisis receiving centers across the State to support individuals dealing with behavioral health, mental health or substance use issues. At a minimum, a crisis receiving center must be established in Androscoggin, Aroostook, Oxford, Penobscot, Washington and York counties. Crisis receiving centers must provide culturally sensitive trauma-informed care. Part B also provides funding to establish 6 crisis receiving centers.</p> <p>Part D provides funding to reduce waiting lists for and expand access to medication management services, including telehealth services and employee recruitment and retention incentives, provided by the Office of Behavioral Health that are similar to the services provided under Department of Health and Human Services rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 65, Behavioral Health Services, to meet the timely access requirements under the consent decree referenced in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 34-B, section 1217.</p>
2243	Sen. T Stewart	Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend MaineCare Rules Governing Certain Types of Behavioral and Mental Health Services and to Form a Stakeholder Group to Study Methods for Improving Those Services	Public Hearing on 3/7/24 at 2:30pm - HHS Committee	<p>This resolve directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend the MaineCare rules governing reimbursement for outpatient behavioral health services provided in public schools under the MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapters II and III, Section 65 and for services provided in residential treatment facilities for persons with mental illness and in specialized or scattered residential treatment facilities as described in the MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter III, Section 97, Appendices E and F, respectively. The department must initiate the rule-making process immediately after the resolve goes into effect, and the rules must remain in effect until the department completes a full rate determination. Finally, the resolve requires the department to form a stakeholder group to study how to develop more sustainable models of outpatient and residential mental and behavioral health treatment services and how to increase access to those services within the State. By January 1, 2025, the stakeholder group must submit a report to the department, and by January 15, 2025, the department must submit to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health coverage, insurance and financial services matters a summary of the report based on the stakeholder group's findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation. The joint standing committee is authorized to report out legislation.</p>
HOUSING/RENTAL ASSISTANCE BILLS				

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
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	The funds provided by this bond issue, in the amount of \$100,000,000, will be used to build new affordable housing for low-income households through the construction of new structures and adaptive reuse of existing structures.
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 337	Rep. Cheryl Golek	An Act to Amend the Regulations of Manufactured Housing to Increase Affordable Housing	Public Hearing, Tuesday 1/23/24; Work Session 1/30/24 – Housing Committee voted OTP-AM	Sponsor Amendment replaces the entire concept draft bill: This amendment aims to increase affordable housing by allowing manufactured housing (modular and “newer mobile homes” as defined) to be located on lots where single family homes are allowed. This includes only 1) “newer mobile homes” built after 1976 that are constructed in compliance with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development standards, and 2) modular homes that the manufacturer certifies are constructed in compliance with Title 10, chapter 951, and rules adopted under that chapter.
LD 853	Rep. Benjamin Collings	RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to Housing	Public Hearing, Tuesday 1/23/24; Work Session 1/30/24 & 2/6/24 – Housing Committee – Divided Report	This resolution proposes to amend the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to housing. Constitutional referendum - the municipal officers of this State shall notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding a statewide election, at a statewide election held in the month of November following the passage of this resolution, to vote upon the ratification of the amendment proposed in this resolution by voting upon the following question: "Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to housing?"
LD 1294	Rep. Traci Gere	An Act to Implement Several Recommendations of the Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Land Use Regulations and Short-term Rentals	House Passed to be Engrossed as Amended by Committee Amendment A on 2/28/24; Senate Read once on 2/29/24 and assigned to next Legislative Day.	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would implement certain recommendations of the Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Land Use Regulations and Short-term Rentals.
LD 1298	Rep. Charles Skold	An Act to Allow a Local Option Sales Tax on Short-term Lodging to Fund Affordable Housing	Public Hearing 2/13; Work Session 2/13/24	This bill allows a municipality to impose a local option sales tax of 1% on short-term lodging that is subject to the state sales and use

			and 2/27/24 – Taxation Committee - Divided Report	tax if approved by referendum of the voters in that municipality. The revenue from the local option sales tax must be distributed to the municipality imposing the local option sales tax. The distributed revenue must be used in municipal programs that support affordable housing development in that municipality, including rental assistance for lower income households or moderate-income households. Revenue received by a municipality may not be used to reduce or eliminate funding otherwise due the municipality under other provisions of law. The local option sales tax may not take effect before July 1, 2024.
LD 1490	Rep. Chris Kessler	An Act to Reduce Rental Housing Costs by Eliminating Additional Fees at or Prior to the Commencement of Tenancy	Work Session held 1/16/24 – Judiciary Committee – Divided Report	This bill provides that at or prior to the commencement of a tenancy, a landlord, the landlord's agent or a real estate broker may not require a tenant or prospective tenant to pay an amount in excess of the rent for the first full month of occupancy, a security deposit and the purchase and installation cost for a key and lock.
LD 1493	Rep. Raegan LaRochelle	An Act to Increase Affordable Housing by Expanding Tax Increment Financing	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted – Carried over	This bill authorizes the creation of Pine Tree Housing Zones to allow retained value resulting from a tax increment financing district in a municipality to be used anywhere in the municipality for the purposes of the purchase, rehabilitation or establishment of affordable and workforce housing in the municipality. The bill provides for a sales tax exemption for the associated purchasing of goods and services and electricity for a qualified project in a Pine Tree Housing Zone.
LD 1505	Rep. Kristen Cloutier	An Act to Amend the Maine Cooperative Affordable Housing Ownership Act	Signed by the Governor - will become Public Law	This bill amends the Maine Cooperative Affordable Housing Ownership Act to include group equity cooperatives. It also provides that a housing assistance program must be made reasonably available to residents of housing cooperatives.
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.
LD 1672	Rep. Traci Gere	An Act to Establish an Affordable Housing Permitting Process	Public Hearing held 1/5/24; Work Session 1/26/24 and 2/6/24 –	This bill establishes the Affordable Housing Development Review Board under the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning

			Housing Committee – Voted ONTP	in order to issue permits for the development of affordable housing and workforce housing.
LD 1673	Rep. Traci Gere	An Act to Encourage Affordable Housing and Mixed-use Development by Establishing a Thriving Corridors Program	Public Hearing on 5/12; Work Session 1/12/24; Work Session 1/26/24 – Housing Committee – Unanimous OTP-AM	As Amended, this bill would establish a resolve to create a working group to design a cross-agency plan. The Working Group would consist of the Commissioners of: DOT, EPA, DECD, ACF, Housing, GOPIF.
LD 1710	Rep. Cheryl Golek	An Act to Establish the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program and Amend the Laws Regarding Tenants and the Municipal General Assistance Program	Public Hearing on 5/12; Work Session 5/26; Work Session 5/30; Work Session 2/13/24 – Housing Committee – OTP-AM	Sponsor Amendment amends the bill as follows: This amendment replaces the bill. This amendment requires the Maine State Housing Authority to establish and administer the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program. The program must include a rental assistance component to assist individuals with the cost of rent and a rental guarantee component to encourage landlords to work with the program and other rental assistance programs in the State. The amendment also creates the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program Fund under the Maine State Housing Authority to carry out the program. The bill appropriates \$16,000,000 of ongoing funds annually. The amendment makes it an unfair trade practice for a landlord to refuse to participate in a federal, state or local tenant-based rental assistance program.
LD 1721	Sen. Jill Duson	An Act to Create Transitional Housing Communities for Homeless Populations in the State	Passed to be Enacted in the House on 2/27/24 and the Senate on 2/28. This bill now goes to the Governor for signature.	This bill creates the Transitional Housing Community Construction Program Fund under MaineHousing to create transitional housing communities, which are clusters of transitional housing dwelling units for homeless individuals and families to provide stability and to allow the individuals and families to transition to permanent housing. The bill directs that transitional housing communities be created throughout the State designed to cover all 16 counties. The bill directs DHHS, through independent housing services under its administration of assisted housing programs, to coordinate, arrange or provide services including job training and health care services for residents of transitional housing communities. The bill also provides one-time funding MaineHousing to create transitional housing communities and funding to the department to provide independent housing services to residents of transitional housing.
LD 1867	Rep. Grayson Lookner	An Act to Establish the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority	Passed to be Enacted in the House on 2/27/24; on 2/28 Senate Placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted.	This bill establishes the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority within the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority to develop, own, lease and maintain mixed-income, permanently affordable public residential housing in this State.

LD 2106 	Sen. M Rotundo	An Act to Accelerate the Production of Housing and Strengthen the Maine Historic Property Rehabilitation Tax Credit	Public Hearing 1/24/24; Work Session 2/13 – Taxation Committee – Divided Report	This bill increases the maximum tax credit allowed for certified historic property rehabilitation projects. It also allows nonprofit organizations that claim the historic preservation tax credit or the affordable housing tax credit to file their refund claims on a calendar year basis. The changes in the bill apply to tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2024.
LD 2158	Rep. C Golek	An Act to Improve the Housing Voucher System	Public Hearing 1/30/24; Work Session 2/2/24 and 2/20/24 – Housing Committee - OTP-AM	<p>This bill does the following regarding housing vouchers.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It requires MaineHousing to collect data regarding and to submit applications to HUD for waivers that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Allow MaineHousing to enter into contracts at a higher rate than the fair market rental rate as established by HUD. The waiver may not result in fewer housing vouchers being issued than before the waiver was obtained; B. Allow MaineHousing or a municipal housing authority to establish reasonable time limits for the use of housing vouchers issued by the MaineHousing or the municipal housing authority; and C. Allow MaineHousing or a municipal housing authority to issue housing vouchers that may be used upon issuance anywhere within the State. 2. Contingent upon approval of a waiver, it codifies under the powers and duties of MaineHousing the power authorized by each waiver. 3. It requires MaineHousing to submit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Suggested legislation that requires all housing authorities or public corporations created or authorized pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 30-A, chapter 201 to conform their housing voucher programs to the housing voucher program administered by MaineHousing; and B. A report detailing its efforts to obtain the 3 waivers from HUD. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters is authorized to report out to the 132nd Legislature in 2025 legislation related to the report and suggested legislation submitted by MaineHousing.
LD 2169	Sen. M Daughtry	An Act to Create Workforce Housing to Promote Economic Development in Maine	Public Hearing 2/6/24; Work Session 2/13/24, 2/27/24, and 3/5/24 – Housing Committee	This bill establishes the Workforce Housing Development Loan Fund in the Department of Economic and Community Development to provide loans to support the development of affordable workforce housing. The department must solicit applications for loans from the fund through a competitive application process. Loans may be awarded to community banks at an interest rate of 0% to provide funding to housing developers to develop housing for employees who earn 60% to 120% of the area median income as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
LD 2209	Committee Bill	An Act to Increase the Cap on Bonds Issued by the Maine State Housing Authority to Reflect Current Housing Production Needs in the State	Public Hearing and Work Session on 2/20/24 – Housing Committee - OTP-AM	This committee bill is presented by the Joint Select Committee on Housing pursuant to Joint Order 2023, H.P. 3, section 3. The bill increases the cap on mortgage purchase bonds authorized to be issued by the Maine State Housing Authority to align with current housing production needs in the State.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE & SAFETY NET BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
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 1732	Rep. Michele Meyer	An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program	1/30/24 Work Session – HHS Committee – Voted OTP-AM	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 the delivery of trauma-informed and culturally and linguistically appropriate services, written decisions and a database.

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 1584	Rep. Holly Stover	An Act to Provide Funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to Temporarily Restore Benefits Being Reduced by the Federal Government	Passed to be Enacted in the House and Senate. Placed on the Special Appropriations Table – Carried over	Under the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the Federal Government provided emergency benefit allotments under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. These emergency benefit allotments are scheduled to expire March 1, 2023. This bill extends for 6 months, but on a decreasing basis, the amount of benefits available under SNAP by providing General Fund funds to provide the following level of benefits: 1. In March 2023, 100% of the federal emergency benefit allotment; 2. In April 2023, 75% of the federal emergency benefit allotment; 3. In May 2023, 50% of the federal emergency benefit allotment; and 4. From June through August 2023, 25% of the federal emergency benefit allotment. Beginning in September 2023, an additional amount is not provided.
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BILLS THE ARE NOW DEAD

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 2138	Rep C Madigan	An Act to Improve Funding for Homeless Shelters	This bill is now DEAD (instead incorporated in LD 2136 above)	This resolve, as amended by the Sponsor, provides ongoing funds for low-barrier homeless shelters – allocating \$2.5 million beginning next fiscal year.
LD 328	Sen. Trey Stewart	An Act to Improve Mental Health in Maine	This bill is now DEAD	This bill brings MaineCare regulations into alignment with Dartmouth Assertive Community Treatment Scale fidelity items, ensuring high-quality, evidence based Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services for Maine residents with psychotic disorders and high needs.
LD 1633	Sen. Pinny Beebe-Center	An Act to Establish a Community-based Reentry Program in All Department of Corrections Facilities	This bill is now DEAD	This bill creates a community-based reentry program administered by a community based organization at each correctional facility operated by the Department of Corrections. The program is a peer-supported program that provides individualized reentry plans to incarcerated individuals starting from 2 years prior to an individual's release, involving multiple meetings to determine the individual's education, job training, substance use disorder treatment, housing and other needs subsequent to release and follow-up meetings after release to support the individual's reentry into the community and to reduce or prevent recidivism. This bill also creates the Peer Reentry Review Board, which oversees, advises, studies data and makes recommendations to the community-based reentry program and reports to the Commissioner of Corrections and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over criminal justice and public safety matters.
LD 314	Sen. Craig Hickman	An Act to Establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Housing in Maine	This Bill is now DEAD	This bill would establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Housing in Maine. The commission would be a quasi-independent agency funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development. Members of the

				commission would include housing advocates and organizations, policy makers, housing developers, housing experts, landlords and tenants. The commission would identify the hurdles to developing more housing units and recommend solutions to each branch of government.
LD 371	Sen. Jeffrey Timberlake	An Act to Address Certain Local Zoning Ordinances	This bill is now DEAD	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to address certain local zoning ordinances.
LD 387	Rep. Mark Blier	An Act to Promote Affordable Housing by Providing a Tax Exemption for Housing Choice Vouchers	This Bill is now DEAD	This bill provides an income tax deduction for income received by a landlord as tenant based housing assistance payments in the form of Section 8 housing choice vouchers administered by the Maine State Housing Authority.
LD 721	Sen. Matthea Daughtry	An Act to Preserve Historic Buildings and Promote Affordable Housing	This Bill is now DEAD	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would enact provisions of law to preserve historic buildings and promote affordable housing.
LD 1864	Rep. James Boyle	An Act to Increase Maine's Housing Supply by Prohibiting Certain Zoning Requirements in Areas Where Public Sewer and Water Infrastructure Are Available and in Designated Growth Areas	This Bill is now DEAD	This bill provides restrictions on municipal ordinance requirements related to minimum lot size in areas where water and sewer infrastructure are available and in areas where water and sewer infrastructure are not available but that are within designated growth areas. For a housing development served by a public, special district or other centrally managed water system and a public, special district or other comparable sewer system and that is located in an area in which dwelling units are allowed, a municipality must allow a dwelling unit on a lot with a minimum size of 5,000 square feet. For a housing development located in a designated growth area that is not served by a public, special district or other centrally managed water system and a public, special district or other comparable sewer system, that complies with minimum lot size requirements in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, chapter 423-A and that is located in an area in which dwelling units are allowed, a municipality must allow a dwelling unit on a lot with a minimum size of 20,000 square feet. The bill also provides limits to ordinance provisions relating to lot coverage, road frontage and setback requirements.
LD 1904	Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross	An Act to Enact the Fair Chance Housing Act	This Bill is now DEAD	This bill establishes the Maine Fair Chance Housing Act, the purpose of which is to ensure that a person is not denied housing based solely on the existence of a history of criminal convictions. This bill prohibits a housing provider from considering an applicant's criminal history until after the housing provider determines that the applicant meets all other qualifications for tenancy. A person who is aggrieved by a violation of the Maine Fair Chance Housing Act by a housing provider may file a grievance with the Maine Human Rights Commission and, if it is a violation by a private housing provider, may bring a civil action in court.

LD 1426	Rep. Kristi Mathieson	An Act to Secure Housing for the Most Vulnerable Maine Residents by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal General Assistance	This bill is now DEAD	This bill: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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; 2. 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; 3. 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; 4. Increases from 70% to 90% the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by a municipality and each Indian tribe; 5. 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; 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 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
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	This bill is now DEAD	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 1940	Sen. Craig Hickman	An Act to Promote Consistent Policies within Growth Management Programs in Order to Increase Food Security and Economic Resiliency in Local Communities	This Bill is now DEAD	<p>This bill amends the laws governing planning and land use regulation to encourage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Municipalities to ensure that the language and requirements in charters, policies, codes, regulations, bylaws and fees align with each other and meet the overall intent of the comprehensive plan approved by the legislative body; 2. Municipalities to develop policies that assess community needs and environmental, food security and economic resiliency effects of municipal regulations, lessen the effect of excessive parking requirements for buildings in downtowns and on main streets and provide for alternative approaches for compliance relating to the reuse of upper floors of buildings in downtowns and on main streets; and 3. In the development of affordable housing, municipalities and multimunicipal regions to establish policies that assess food security and economic resiliency effects of municipal regulations.
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