Disclaimer: These notes are not intended to represent direct quotes, things may not be in chronological order, and ideas may not always be accurately attributed. If you have corrections or comments, please let Scott know and he will edit accordingly.

**Augusta:** Melody Fitch (Family Violence Project), Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Rob Parritt (City of Portland), Donna Kelley (KBH), Stephanie Primm (Knox County Homeless Coalition), Beth Crow (Family Violence Project), Mike Mooney (New Beginnings), James Gagne (Prebel Street Veterans Services), Dan Fleming (Shaw House), Dan Brennan (MaineHousing), Joanie Klayman (Preble Street), Arwen Agee (VA), Cindy Namer (MaineHousing), Wendy Dubois ( The Opportunity Alliance), Chet Barnes (DHHS)

**Portland:** Cullen Ryan (CHOM), Megan Void (City of Portland), Norm Maze (Shalom House), John Winnikka (Franie Peabody), Rachel Boyce (Preble Street), Amy Grommes Pulaski (Gommes-Pulaski Consulting), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Ginny Dill (Shalom House), Tony Giarratano (Shalom House)

**On the Phone**: Alley Smith (Veterans, Inc.), Craig Phillips (Tedford Housing), Melissa McEntee (RGH), Emily Flinkstrom (Fair Tide), Jennifer Weatherbee (CHCS), Chris Roberts (HUD), Joe McNally (Milestone), Boyd Kronholm (BAHS), Kari Bradstreet (Hope and Justice Project), Jessica Wood (OCFS), Tom Michaud (Milbridge Harbor), Awa Conteh (City of Bangor), Wendy Thomas (VA- VASH), Heidi Bradley (CHCS).

[If I missed anyone – or missed or misspelled your name, please let me know]

**Meeting: Maine CoC**

**Date: May 18, 2017, 1:00 to 3:00 PM**

**Location: Tandberg Teleconferencing Sites**

**Maine**

**Continuum of Care**

**Review of Minutes**: Minutes from April 20, 2017 approved as submitted.

**ESHAP Funding:** Dan Brennan joined us to discuss concerns regarding the 1st Quarter ESHAP Funding payments. The way the formula is described in the Rule, it should factor in the number of people assessed, stabilized, and housed. Last year, payments were based only on those who were assessed and stabilized. This year, the number of people housed was also factored in. While this is in keeping with the Rule, the disparity in the results is not what was expected. After careful review, MaineHousing has determined a course of action to address the issue. MaineHousing will not be taking any money back from the payments that have already gone out. They will recalculate the payments based on the prior formula, and make adjustments to future payments to bring the annual totals back in line. Because the formula that includes the housing element is written in the Rule, it will require changing the Rule itself – which will take time. In the meantime, MaineHousing is proposing an ‘Emergency Rule’ that will be good for 90 days. That time span will cover the first and second quarter payments, and hopefully provide enough time to change the Rule before the 3rd Quarter payments go out.

-Dan thanked everyone for their patience and professionalism in how they approached this – it was very helpful.

-Joe M. and Rob P. thanked Dan and MaineHousing for responding so quickly and for finding a solution that appears to work for everyone.

-Cullen also expressed thanks and added that it is important to recognize that MaineHousing was trying to implement an important element of the Maine Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness by allocating funding to follow people into permanent housing.

**Merger Update:**

-**Meetings:** It was decided that we will continue to meet on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 1:00 to 3:00, utilizing the Tandberg Teleconferencing system to connect to remote locations.

-**Chairs**: PCOC had 2 – Jon Bradley and Rob Parritt, though Jon is retiring soon. MCOC had 3 – Vickey Rand, Ginny Dill, and Melody Fitch. It was generally agreed that we do not need 5 Chairs. Having 3 Chairs, one representing each Region, seems good. Melody expressed concern that we do not have anyone from Region 3 and said she would be willing to step down to make room for that person. There was also concern about changing leadership now with the NOFA potentially coming soon. There was a MOTION to keep the current chairs in place for now. PASSED.

-**Governance:** The Consolidation Committee is looking at the current docs from both groups and will make recommendations for the newly merged entity.

-**Committees:** Amy provided anorganizational chart showing a proposed committee structure and Donna outlined the roles of the various committees and why they were grouped the way they were. There were some questions about the distinctions between the Board, Steering and the full CoC. HUD requires that we have a Board and historically our board has dealt with ‘big picture’ policy related topics that needed to be consistent between the Maine and Portland CoC’s – things like Coordinated Entry, and System Performance. MCOC Steering dealt more with the day to day work and coordinating the work of the other committees that each had specific tasks. PCOC, being a smaller group of providers who all worked closely together, did not have as formal a committee structure. The Policy Committee did not appear on the draft and there was discussion as to where it would best fit. There was a **MOTION** to approve the proposed outline with Policy added. The motion **PASSED**, understanding that things are subject to change as we revise Governance.

-**Voting**: Reviewing the attendance from PCOC showed that most agencies who were eligible to vote at PCOC were already regularly attending and were eligible to vote at MCOC. There were only two voting PCOC members who were not already voting members of MCOC: The City of Portland, and The Opportunity Alliance. There was a **MOTION** to recognize CoP and TOA as eligible to vote, effective immediately. **PASSED**. Portland agencies were encouraged to join committees, as committee participation is the best way to ensure that their concerns and interests are addressed.

**CoC ESG Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Policies and Procedures**: A DRAFT of this document was distributed prior to the meeting and members were prepared to comment.

-Much of our Monitoring depends on APR’s, but there are known issues with HUD’s new SAGE reporting tool and the information is not accurate – S+C has submitted two APR’s and they are both wrong – they have 17 more to go but need guidance on how to proceed, and the CoC need to figure out how we monitor without the right data in the APR’s? Can we NOT look at APR’s?

-This will impact all projects and the entire CoC – not just S+C. We need to address this with HUD. Every Project needs to notify HUD about these errors. The Data Committee, the Projects Committee, the Steering Committee, the Collaborative Applicant, the HMIS Lead – everyone need to notify HUD that SAGE is not working. It needs to be fixed – soon.

There was a **MOTION** that the Monitoring Process be amended to allow the use of something other than the SAGE APR’s until that issue is resolved and the Project Committee will create an Ad-hoc sub committee to investigate alternatives. The motion PASSED.

-There is not much about ESG here - how do we monitor ESG? The CoC only needs to monitor the ESG Recipient, which is MaineHousing. That process will be covered in the ESG Written Standards. MaineHousing needs to monitor the sub-recipients – the shelters – and they are already doing that, and the CoC will review that information.

-The draft says that Targets will be ‘appropriate to population and program type’ but there is not follow up to explain what that means or how it would work. This needs to be detailed. For example, using Income as a measure does not make sense for programs that serve Youth or even Adults with sever and persistent mental illness – we know this – we discuss it every year – but it’s still there and these programs continue to score low on that measure. There was a **MOTION** that the Consolidation Committee work on this issue with input from sub-population providers. **PASSED.**

-Timing wise, there are a few places where this says the committee will ‘begin’ after the NOFA is released. While there may be new information in the NOFA related to HUD priorities, which could impact scoring and ranking, Monitoring can and should be done before the NOFA is out. Also, there are several places where it ties the Monitoring to the date of the projects’ APR submission. APRs are submitted throughout the year, depending on each projects operating term. Will the Project Com be monitoring each project when their APR is submitted, or will they be collecting all that and monitoring all projects at the same time – this is not clear.

-The Project Committee cannot begin Monitoring until the CoC establishes priorities. Wrong. This year’s Monitoring should be based upon the Priorities established last year – that is the time frame we are monitoring the projects for. If we change priorities now based on this year’s NOFA, those should be looked at during the next monitoring cycle, not this one. We should not hold projects to criteria that did not exist during the time frame we are looking at. Monitoring should be happening now – Should have been happening already - using criteria established last year.

-There are several references to establishing additional “Performance Measures”. HUD has defined what they want for these PM’s, and the HMIS Vendors have to create reports based on HUD guidance. If we want to add other things on we should call them targets or something else to avoid any confusion, and we need to keep in mind that any additional criteria will require customized reports that take time to develop and test.

-There is nothing in this draft about how HMIS will be monitored or evaluated. HMIS is not like any of the other programs CoC funded projects and it needs to be evaluated on very different criteria. There are separate monitoring and scoring tools for HMIS to address those concerns.

-We should make Priorities – not just setting them but the whole process of how and when they go into effect – the Big Think topic for next month.

-The Consolidation Committee will take all comments and concerns into consideration and will bring an updated draft of the document to the meeting next month.

**State and Federal Updates:** See Policy Committee notes attached at the end of these minutes for full details. The Omnibus includes several increases for homeless program. However, the proposed ACA Replacement is very problematic and would significantly cut Medicade. Senator King has taken a strong stand against this. A **MOTION** was made that MCOC write to thank Senator King for his opposition to this. **PASSED**. Senator Collins has not been as clear. A **MOTION** was made that MCOC write to Senator Collins to inform her of the potentially devastating impact this replacement would have and encourage her to join Senator King in opposing it. **PASSED**. Cullen will draft the letters. SHC is sending similar letters.

**Statewide Homeless Council:** (full minutes, once approved by SHC, will be posted at [www.mainehomelessplanning.org](http://www.mainehomelessplanning.org) )

-BRAP is now working with DOC on discharge planning for those who are eligible.

-Discussed the 1115 wavier – the proposed changes are not at all what SHC recommended.

- There was a good discussion on LTS, both regarding the term itself, and how the use of the ‘most appropriate available’ housing resource may not always be enough to ensure stability.

-PIT Reports were reviewed.

-The revisions to the Maine Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness are nearly finalized and will be going to the Regions soon. SCH plans to incorporate this and a few other things into their next press release.

**Policy Brief to Streamline the CoC Process:**

Cullen recently spoke with Norm Suchar who said that HUD is listening and trying to find ways to improve the process. Some of the proposals include: Multi Year CoC Applications; 5 Year Renewal Terms; Simpler Data Reporting, Standardizing the NOFA Release/Timeline, Shortening the Application. A New England Continuum of Care Round Table with HUD was proposed, though HUD cannot discuss much once the NOFA is out.

**Regional HC Updates:** R1 – meeting in York County next week. R2 – did not meet this month due to the HUD visit. R3- Met last week, nothing new to report.

**Long Term Stayers Update:** Down to 53 people on the Portland list and 6 in Bangor.

**Coordinated Entry:** There was a ‘Train the Trainer’ in Region 3 yesterday with a very good turnout. The R3 Roll out is set for June 1st and R2 and R1 will follow. We need to identify ‘champions’ for R2 and R1 – people who will coordinate and rally local support the Josh has for R3.

**HMIS Advisory Committee:** The System Performance Measure Report asks about income the same way the APR’s do and has the same issue as the APR’s that are being submitted to SAGE. The problem is in the way the reports are pulling the data, so it is something that Bowman, the HMIS vendor, needs to fix on their end. HUD knows this is a problem. In the meantime all reports submitted should include comments about these known issues impacting the data.

**NOFA Related:**

**MCOC Score Appeal:** Still no response from HUD Appeals Office.

**Unfunded Projects Update:** Milbridge Harbor Apartments requested and received HUD TA in regard to the loss of CoC Funding. Tom said it was informative, though not particularly helpful. They talked about possible ways to reduce the overall project costs, but they are already operating on a very bare bones budget. TA suggested using Section 8/HCV or some other type of voucher, and Milbridge has explored those options. MCOC also sent letters about this to local housing authorities. MCOC did not receive any reply but Tom said he did, and the answer was no. At this time, with the changes to the federal budget, there are no Section 8/HCV vouchers available. STEP and BRAP are not appropriate to the population and have other conditions restricting their use in this situation. Shelter Plus Care is the only other voucher option and would seem like a good fit.

-Chet has been in communication with HUD and they have agreed to waive any restrictions that would prevent the use of Shelter Plus Care in these unit. Maine DHHS has agreed to make S+C vouchers available for this purpose. The only remaining barrier is the MCOC prioritization.

-Cullen expressed concern that we would be setting a precedent of using S+C to solve a problem that HUD created through their ranking and tiering requirements. How often can we be expected to do this and will DHHS offer S+C to every unfunded project now?

-Chet stated that this is not intended as a precedent or a commitment to any future assignments. This is about preventing 5 formerly homeless individuals with sever and persistent mental illness from becoming homeless again. We have the ability to support these 5 people now. A few years ago we gave the Milbridge Harbor Project notice about their lack of performance and participation. Since that time they have stepped up, they have improved, and they have attended meetings. Despite that, the scoring and tiering placed them near the bottom of the 2016 project listing.

-Tom said tha they have been trying to find other funding sources for the last few years but there is simply nothing else out there. They received notice from HUD about the 2016 awards in December and their funding from the last grant ran out the following month, at the end of January. The have been able to keep the doors open and the lights on since then but they cannot sustain it – they are not a big agency and their resources are limited.

-DHHS is proposing to use Tenant Based Vouchers, and would back fill if a client choose to leave after their initial one year term.

-If this was a low performing project, why put more resources into it – what if it continues to perform poorly? Will we loose these vouchers too?

-What is the turn-over? If it’s 5 beds, and everyone leaves next year, taking those vouchers with them, and we back fill the units, that’s 10 vouchers, then 15, and so on. Last year 2 of the 5 units had turn over. The prior year there was zero turn over. Historically, people stay in these units for years. There are not a lot of other options in the area for this population.

-Maine has more S+C per capita than any other state. Over 900 households. We have the ability to keep these 5 people stably housed. We should not be making these people homeless when we have the ability to solve this particular situation.

-There are two issues here: 1) the project itself, and 2) the proposed solution to the problem. It seems everyone wants the project to be able to continue to serve these clients. The solution appears to be providing a permanent rental subsidy. That means BRAP (which leads to a permanent subsidy), Shelter Plus Care, or Section 8/HCV. The Department says BRAP is not an option. Among other things, BRAP tenants have to pay 51% of their income toward rent. Even though Milbridge is no longer receiving ongoing Continuum Renewal funding, they still must abide by the HUD covenants which state tenants can pay no more than 30% of their income toward rent. There is a Section 8/HCV freeze at MaineHousing, which covers this jurisdiction. The next closest HA is nearly an hour way, is probably also facing the same sort of freeze, add this is not in their jurisdiction.

-At this point in the discussion the meeting was about to end – the Tandberg Teleconferencing system shuts off automatically when the scheduled time is up and the meeting was set to end at 4:00.

-**MOTION**: MCOC will allow DHHS to utilize Shelter Plus Care Vouchers in the units at the Milbridge Harbor Project. **PASSED.**

Meeting ended abruptly at 4:00.

**Next Full Meeting: June 15, 2017 from 1:00 to \*4:00\* (extended)**

**Policy/Advocacy Update – 5/2/2017**

**Federal Legislation Update:**

**FY17 Appropriations –** Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress announced late in the evening Sunday, April 30 that they reached a deal on a final FY17 spending package to fund the federal government through September and avert a government shutdown. The spending package is expected to be voted on in the House and Senate before the current Continuing Resolution ends on 5/5. At more than $1.07 trillion, the final budget agreement upholds the bipartisan deal made in late 2015 to lift the spending caps required by Budget Control Act for defense and non-defense programs. The deal does not include any of the $18 billion in cuts requested by the Trump administration for non-defense programs, which include affordable housing and community development.

**HUD FY17 Appropriations** – The FY17 spending bill funds most HUD programs at or above FY16 levels, but below the high-water marks provided in the draft versions. The only programs to see funding cuts compared to FY16 were the Public Housing Operating Fund ($4.4 billion in FY17 compared to $4.5 billion in FY16) and Section 811 Housing for People with Disabilities ($146 million in FY17 compared to $151 million in FY16).

* **Tenant-Based Rental Assistance:**  The spending package provides $20.292 billion for tenant-based rental assistance, $18.355 billion of which is to renew previous contracts. The bill allocates $47 million for Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) which includes an additional investment of roughly 5,000 vouchers, $7 million of which is to serve Native American veterans. The bill also provides $10 million to support new Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers and $120 million for Section 811 mainstream vouchers.
* **Project-Based Rental Assistance:** The bill provides $10.816 billion to renew project-based rental assistance contracts for calendar year 2017, an increase of $186 million from the FY16 funding level.
* **Homeless Assistance Grants:** The bill increases funding for homeless assistance programs to $2.383 billion from $2.25 billion in FY16. The bill targets $43 million to address youth homelessness and waives the requirement that youth 24 years of age and under provide third-party documentation to receive housing and supportive services within the Continuums of Care. The bill extends the authorization for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), which is set to expire this year, by one additional year.
* **HOME:** The bill would level-fund the HOME Investments Partnerships program (HOME) at $950 million.
* **CDBG:** The bill would level-fund the Community Development Block Grant program at $3 billion.
* **USICH:** The bill provides a one-year extension for the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).

**Trump Administration & HUD:** (From the NLIHC) The White House announced that President Trump has nominated Pamela Patenaude to serve as HUD deputy secretary. Ms. Patenaude is the president of the J. Ronald Terwilliger Foundation for Housing America's Families and has deep knowledge of, experience with, and proven commitments to affordable housing. Responding to the announcement, NLIHC President and CEO Diane Yentel stated, "The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) congratulates Pam Patenaude on her nomination as deputy secretary of HUD. Ms. Patenaude is a strong leader with decades of experience cultivating bipartisan solutions to America's affordable rental housing crisis. NLIHC urges the Senate to confirm Ms. Patenaude. We look forward to working with her to preserve, improve and expand the critical programs necessary to end homelessness and housing poverty for the millions of families who struggle to pay their rent each month."

**President Trump’s proposed budget (from CBPP)**: President Trump released his “skinny” budget on 3/16 – a budget blueprint for FY 18 (the full budget will likely be submitted to Congress in May). The President’s FY 18 budget blueprint includes a $6.2 billion—or 13.2%—cut to HUD programs compared to FY16 to help offset a $54 billion increase to defense spending. Specifically, the HUD budget:

* Eliminates CDBG, HOME and Choice Neighborhoods.

According to CBPP, the budget says the federal government will continue to help 4.5 million households pay the rent, but it provides no details on funding for HUD’s rental assistance programs, which helped nearly 4.9 million households in 2016. But preliminary budget documents leaked the week of 3/6 indicate that the President’s proposals in the full budget request will likely include significant rental assistance cuts, including:

* Public housing cut by $2 billion, or 30%.
* Housing Choice Vouchers would be funded at $19.3 billion, about $300 million below the 2016 level, and about $1.7B below the amount estimated needed to renew all vouchers in 2018. This is equal to 200,000 vouchers being lost.
* Cuts that would result in about 25,000 homes for seniors and people with disabilities being lost.

**Effect of the President’s FY 18 HUD budget cuts on Maine (per CBPP analysis):**

| **State** | **Vouchers Cut** | **Public Housing Funding Cut** | **CDBG Funding Cut** | **HOME Funding Cut** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ME** | **-1,071** | **-$6,290,625** | **-$16,494,704** | **-$4,303,357** |

**National Housing Trust Fund:**  With President Trump’s proposed cuts to NDD programs, and the potential effect on housing programs (see above), funding for the HTF could face significant budget cuts and other threats this year. In the past, Congress has proposed to gut the HTF and to use its funding to fill holes in the HUD budget. Congress must instead ensure that all affordable housing programs—including the HTF—are fully funded. The HTF is the only federal program designed to build and preserve housing affordable to people with the lowest incomes. We must ensure that the program is protected – not eliminated.

**The Affordable Care Act (ACA):** The House Republican health plan, “The American Health Care Act,” unveiled on 3/6 and then pulled from the House floor before a vote could take place, is being revamped for reconsideration in Congress. According to CBPP, the newly released Meadows-MacArthur amendment does nothing to mitigate the American Health Care Act’s (AHCA) coverage losses of 24 million people, $839 billion in Medicaid cuts, or large increases in premiums and out-of-pocket costs for moderate-income and older individual-market consumers. It does, however, eliminate key Affordable Care Act (ACA) protections for people with pre-existing conditions. The Meadows-MacArthur amendment would largely restore pre-ACA rules for people with pre-existing conditions. Just like before the ACA, insurers could discriminate based on medical history, eliminate coverage for key health services, and impose annual and lifetime limits on benefits.

**S. 743: A Bill to Strengthen the United Stated Interagency Council on Homelessness:** Senators Collins and Reed introduced legislation on 3/28 to strengthen and eliminate the sunset for the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). Referred to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

**Senate Democrats Unveil Comprehensive Infrastructure Plan, Affordable Housing Included:** Senate Democrats unveiled their infrastructure plan: A Blueprint to Rebuild America’s Infrastructure. The $1 trillion plan aims to create over 15 million jobs, and addresses issues including broadband internet, downtown revitalization, water and sewer, schools, roads and bridges, and also includes investments for public and affordable housing.

***NEW –* H.R. 161: Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act. – Sponsored by Representative Hastings (Florida).** This bill would amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a grant program to provide supportive services in permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals and families, and for other purposes. Referred to the House Energy and Commerce committee.

**H.R. 948: The Common Sense Housing Investment Act, to help end homelessness and housing poverty through comprehensive tax reform. – Referred to House Ways and Means, Financial Services committee*.*** According to the NLIHC the [*Common Sense Housing Investment Act*](http://cqrcengage.com/nlihc/app/thru?ep=AAAAC2Flc0NpcGhlcjAxBuGrlqP3Tp_K3rEdOWjgZeJ_hryGlWg6W1-Ie7x-bYwgcrCzEvvjb3EyWJGKtkq4DRQja4hjOcWqz23UlCVubtpNTPbYa70emTvSF167-1pXOTkBF64RLMTUxap557_93WQOGSGjLVaPdtfEZaxL3FiKksM3qt8yiGwSRimIg3UbuvAzrzb7xo0bboFv55pXZbMPQ9mQpjGZJEkn-8nCj9CVpJTW5ZcspS596EsAZ6s&lp=0) calls for modest reforms to the mortgage interest deduction, a $70 billion tax write-off that largely benefits America's highest-income households, and reinvests the significant savings into providing affordable housing for people with the greatest needs. The bill would boost funding for the Housing Trust Fund, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, public housing, and rental assistance solutions-without adding any costs to the federal government. The reforms are simple and bipartisan. First, the bill reduces the size of a mortgage eligible for the tax break from $1 million to the first $500,000-impacting fewer than 6% of homeowners. Second, the bill converts the mortgage interest deduction into a tax credit. This would allow 15 million more low and moderate income homeowners who currently do not benefit from the mortgage interest deduction to get a much-needed tax break. The United for Homes campaign-including more than 2,300 national, state, and local organizations and elected officials in all 435 congressional districts-strongly endorses H.R 948.

**H.R. 6378: To amend the Public Health Service Act to revise the amount of minimum allotments under the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness Program. *– No new action/update.*** Sponsor: Rep. Peter Welch [D-VT], co-sponsor Rep. Cramer, Kevin [R-ND].

**H.R. 4888: Ending Homelessness Act of 2016** – ***No new action/update.***Introduced on 3/23 by House Financial Services Committee Ranking Member Maxine Waters (D-CA).

**S.993/H.R.1854, The Comprehensive Justice and Mental Health Act – *No new action/update.*** Introduced by Senators Franken (D-MN) - Cornyn (R-TX) and Representatives Collins (R-GA)-Scott (D-VA).

**State Legislation Update:**

* **Governor LePage released his 2017-2018 Biennial Budget late on Friday, January 6, 2016**. **The budget targets many areas of DHHS’ spending, with a stated goal of “stabilizing DHHS.” – *Public hearings on the biennial budget will be held between 2/6 and 3/8. The full Biennial Budget schedule can be found online:*** [***http://legislature.maine.gov/uploads/originals/detailed-biennial-ph-schedule-blocks.pdf***](http://legislature.maine.gov/uploads/originals/detailed-biennial-ph-schedule-blocks.pdf)

**Areas of interest include:**

* + Eliminating eligibility of "able-bodied parents" with earnings over 40% of the Federal Poverty Level from Medicaid. – The Public Hearing for this portion was held on 2/21; budget block work sessions began the week of 2/27. – **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed.**
  + Eliminating eligibility of 19 & 20 year-olds from MaineCare. – The Public Hearing for this portion of the budget was held on 2/21; budget block work sessions began the week of 2/27. **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed but with the recognition that the department needs to submit language to accompany this initiative.**
  + Eliminating the General Assistance Program. (Part ZZZ). The Public Hearing for this portion of the budget was held on 2/22; budget block work sessions began the week of 2/27. **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative (as well as the initiative that would eliminate the program for non-citizens, part HHHH); the minority voted of the Committee voted for both sets of initiatives as proposed.**
    - **General Assistance Minority vote:** Six members of the HHS Committee voted to include additional changes to the General Assistance program. This minority initiative would do the following: (1) eliminate GA for an individual that has timed off of TANF until a period of 5 years has passed and (2) make an applicant for GA who voluntarily abandons or refuses to use an available resource without just cause ineligible for 120 days from the date of abandoning the resource.
  + Reducing the maximum lifetime cap for TANF, from 60 to 36 months. (PART FFFF). The Public Hearing for this portion of the budget was held on 2/22; budget block work sessions began the week of 2/27. **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative, as well as the initiative to eliminate coverage for individuals with drug felony convictions (Part EEEE) removing most good cause exemptions; the minority voted of the Committee voted for Part FFFF as proposed, but amended Part EEEE to allow an individual to qualify for TANF after a period of 10 years has passed since the completion of incarceration for a drug felony conviction.**
  + Repealing the provision that requires DHHS to provide a food supplement program for non-citizens, who would otherwise be eligible for SNAP benefits but for their immigration status. (Part KKKK). The Public Hearing for this portion of the budget is 2/22; budget block work sessions began the week of 2/27. **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed.**
  + Repealing the provision that requires DHHS to provide supplemental security income for non-citizens, who would otherwise be eligible for Supplemental Security Income but for their immigration status. (Part KKKK). The Public Hearing for this portion of the budget was held on 2/22; budget block work sessions began the week of 2/27. **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed.**
  + Repealing the provision that requires DHHS to provide a financial assistance to non-citizens, who would otherwise be eligible for TANF benefits but for their immigration status. (Part KKKK). The Public Hearing for this portion of the budget was held on 2/22; budget block work sessions began the week of 2/27. **Summarized in its memo to the AFA Committee, the HHS Committee voted 7-6 against this initiative; the minority voted of the Committee voted the initiative as proposed.**
  + Full funding for the HOME Fund – Following a joint hearing with the Appropriations Committee, the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development (LCRED) Committee voted unanimously to support full funding for the HOME Fund in the coming biennium. If this proposal is ultimately adopted, it will likely lead to the Fund’s highest level of funding in decades.

**Bills of note:**

* **LD 136**, **An Act Regarding the Eviction Process**, sponsored by Sen. Scott Cyrway (R-Kennebec), would expand the causes for a 7-day notice of termination of tenancy listed in 14 MRSA §6002 to include the following three additional reasons:
  + The tenant or the tenant's guest or invitee is the perpetrator of violence, a threat of violence or sexual assault against another tenant, a tenant's guest, the landlord or the landlord's employee or agent;
  + The person occupying the premises is not an authorized occupant of the premises; or
  + The tenant provided false information on the tenant's rental application.

**Public hearing held 4/12. Work session held 4/26 where it was voted ought to pass as amended.**

**GA BILLS – Public Hearings held 4/10; work sessions held 4/18.**

* **LD 36**, **An Act To Create a 9-month Time Limit on General Assistance Benefits for Certain Persons**, also sponsored by Sen. Brakey, would limit the general assistance benefits for a person without dependents and who is capable of working to a maximum of 275 days every 5 years.  **Voted ought not to pass out of Committee.**
* **LD 10 "An Act To Build Greater Accountability into the General Assistance Program by Increasing the Penalty for Falsely Representing Information on an Application for General Assistance."** Sponsored by Representative Picchiotti. **Divided report out of Committee.**
* **LD 219 "An Act To Prioritize Use of Available Resources in General Assistance Programs."** Sponsored by Senator Brakey. **Divided report out of Committee.**
* **LD 220 "An Act To Align Time Limits in the Municipal General Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program."** Sponsored by Senator Brakey. **Divided report out of Committee.**
* **LD 221 "An Act To Amend the Laws Regarding the Municipality of Responsibility for General Assistance Applicants Released from a State Correctional Facility or County Jail Facility."** Sponsored by Senator Gratwick. **Divided report out of Committee.**
* **LD 1109 "An Act To Improve General Assistance Reimbursements."** Sponsored by Senator Chipman. **Tabled at the Work Session.**

***NEW –* TANF BILLS – Public Hearings held 4/24, Work Session on 5/4 at 1:00 pm in front of the HHS Committee (Cross Building, Room 209)**

* **LD 33**, **An Act To Adjust the Lifetime Limit for the Receipt of TANF Benefits**, sponsored by Sen. Eric Brakey (R-Androscoggin), would change the lifetime limit on receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits from 60 months to 36 months.
* **LD 477 An Act To Prevent Long-term Welfare Dependency,** sponsored by Rep. Deborah Sanderson– Summary: Unemployed applicants for alternative aid who are seeking employment to participate in job search activities that are consistent with the job search activities for participants of the ASPIRE-TANF program.
* **LD 1017 An Act To Strengthen Work Participation in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program,** sponsored by Rep. Deborah Sanderson **–** Summary: This bill removes all the good cause exceptions that prevent a person from being sanctioned under the Additional Support for People in Retraining and Employment or ASPIRE-TANF program– with the exception of DV.
* **LD 1052 An Act To Allow Drug Testing Prior to Providing Welfare Benefits,** sponsored by Rep. Jeffery Hanley– would allow DHHS to require an applicant for TANF benefits to complete a written screening tool to determine the applicant's likelihood of current illegal drug or controlled substance use. Based on the results of the screening tool or interactions with a TANF applicant or recipient, the department may require the applicant or recipient to submit to a drug test as a condition of receiving benefits if the department has a reasonable suspicion that the applicant or recipient is using an illegal drug or controlled substance.
* **LD 1075 An Act To Eliminate Drug Use among Welfare Recipients,** sponsored by Rep. Karleton Ward – Very similar to LD 1052, but would terminate TANF for 120 days to someone who fails to request a fair hearing and who fails a 2nd drug test. Applicants in this situation may not apply for 120 days.
* **LD 336 An Act To Amend the Requirements of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program** sponsored by Rep. Dale Denno–Increases special housing allowance and removes some barriers for 2-parent families.
* **LD 481 An Act To Promote Workforce Participation,** sponsored by Rep. Harold Stewart– Summary: This bill increases the amount of income earned by recipients of benefits under the TANF program that is disregarded in determining the amount of benefits they receive. The amount of the disregard is lowered over time as recipients make the transition to stable employment. – in effect helps to eliminate to “TANF-cliff” for people attempting to work so they don’t immediately lose benefits upon receiving earned income.
* **LD 1302 An Act To Increase Workforce Participation in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and Other Assistance Programs,** sponsored by Rep. Colleen Madigan– Summary: This bill requires DHHS to administer a program to provide financial assistance to families receiving TANF benefits or statewide food supplement program benefits for motor vehicle repairs, registration, and inspection when the motor vehicle is needed for employment purposes. Under the bill, the program must be supported with federal block grant funding under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.
* **LD 1408 An Act To Establish an Independent Citizens Oversight Committee on Maine's Welfare Programs,** sponsored by Senator Nathan Libby– Summary: Requires DHHS to collect data related to performance measures of the TANF program. Also, requires the Department to set benchmarks to measure improvement and the success of the TANF program. Establishes the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee to monitor DHHS programs with respect to meeting benchmarks.

**Other Bills:**

* **LD 970, An Act To End Homelessness by Expanding Housing Support Services**, sponsored by Rep. Erik Jorgensen (D-Portland), would establish the Housing First Assistance Program at MaineHousing. **Tabled at the 4/3 work session.**
* **LD 832, An Act To Carry Out the Will of the People of the State of Maine by Ensuring the Issuance of Bonds To Support the Independence of Maine's Seniors (EMERGENCY)**, sponsored by Sen. Roger Katz (R-Kennebec), a bill similar to his LD 382, calls for the $15M in senior housing bonds approved by the voters in November 2015 to be issued. The bill would remove the requirement that the State Treasurer issue the bonds at the discretion of the Governor. There are conditions under which the bonds would not be issued, e.g., if issuance would adversely impact the State’s credit. **Senate voted ought to pass by a veto-proof majority.**
* **LD 735, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support the Independence of Maine's Seniors**, sponsored by Sen. Amy York (R-Cumberland), provides for a $50M bond issue for senior housing. This is MAHC’s bill and is the original amount proposed to the Legislature two years ago. It would provide $40M for new multifamily units, with at least one facility in each Maine county, $5M to rehabilitate existing affordable senior housing facilities, and $5M for home repair and weatherization of existing homes of low-income seniors. The bond proceeds will leverage an estimated $75,000,000 in private and other funds.

**Other items of interest:**

* ***NEW –* DHHS 1115 Waiver Application** – The Department intends to submit a 1115 Medicaid waiver application to CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) requesting flexibilities in order to implement Medicaid reforms in Maine. Among the reforms the waiver application requests are changes for “able-bodied” adults:  Work requirements, monthly premiums, eliminating presumptive eligibility for hospitals, co-pays, charges for missed appointments, “non-emergency” ER visits (where the person is not admitted) results in a copay, asset tests and limitations, eliminating retroactive eligibility. **DHHS will host two public hearings on the DHHS 1115 waiver application:**

**Hearing 1: Portland Public Hearing**

**Date: May 17, 2017**

**Time: 9:00AM**

**Location: Cross Insurance Arena**

**45 Spring Street**

**Portland, Maine 04101**

**Conference Line: 1-877-455-0244**

**Passcode: 7319892834**

**Hearing 2: Augusta Public Hearing**

**Date: May 18, 2017**

**Time: 9:00 AM**

**Location: Augusta Civic Center**

**76 Community Drive**

**Augusta, Maine 04330**

**Conference Line: 1-877-455-0244**

**Passcode: 7319892834**

**In addition, the 30-day public comment period begins on April 25, 2017 and ends at 11:59 PM on May 25, 2017.** More information on the waiver application can be found at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/oms/rules/demonstration-waivers.shtml?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery>