



Meeting of the Maine Continuum of Care

December 19, 2019 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Meeting at THREE locations via GoTo Meeting

- MaineHousing, 353 Water St, Augusta
- New Beginnings, 134 College Street, Lewiston
- Shalom House, 106 Gilman Street, Portland

Please try to attend at one of the group sites listed above. For those unable to attend a designated group site in person, GoTo Meeting information for joining the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone is listed below. If you want to setup a group site at your agency let Scott know!

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/352415877>

To join via phone, call: [+1 \(646\) 749-3122](tel:+1(646)749-3122) Access Code: 352-415-877

(Please use either your phone or your computer audio to connect – do not use both!)

---Agenda Items---

| | | |
|--|-------------|------------------------|
| 1) Member Introductions | All | |
| 2) Review & Approval of minutes* | All | *Need to Vote |
| 3) Big Thinking Topic: Chair Nominations* | All | *Possible Need to Vote |
| 4) State and Federal Legislation | Cullen | |
| 5) Statewide Homeless Council Update | Steph Primm | |
| 6) Long Term Stayers Update | All | |
| 7) CoC Board Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Board Vacancies*• General updates & any decisions made by the BOD – <i>Standing agenda item</i>• Strategic Planning Update – <i>Standing agenda item</i>• Coordinated Entry Update – <i>Standing agenda item</i>• <i>Jan 2 Meeting Canceled – Board will join SHC meeting Jan 14 for Gaps and Needs presentation</i> | All | *Possible Need to Vote |
| 8) 2020 PIT – <i>Standing agenda item</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Portland Unsheltered Survey | All | |
| 9) Brief Standing Committee Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief, pertinent Committee updates as applicable | All | |
| 10) Next Agenda – Items for next month | All | |
| 11) Any Other Business | | |

Next Meeting: **January 16, 2020 1pm to 3pm**

Please read all materials prior to attending the meetings in order to be prepared to participate in the discussion.

Materials posted at www.mainehomelessplanning.org Contact stibbits@mainehousing.org for more information.

Meeting: Maine CoC

Date: November 21, 2019, 1:00 – 3:00

PM Location: GoToMeeting

Maine Continuum of Care

Attending in Portland: Norm Maze (Shalom House), Ginny Dill (Shalom House), Vickey Rand (CHOM), Bill Higgins (Homeless Advocacy for All), Amy Grommes Pulaski (GP Consulting), Cullen Ryan (CHOM), Ali Lovejoy (Preble Street), Mike Merrill (Volunteers of America), Kirk Carlson (Milestone Recovery), Suzanne Randall (Homeless Advocacy for All)

Attending in Augusta: Scott Tibbitts (MaineHousing), Lauren Bustard (MaineHousing), Arwen Agee (Veterans Administration), David Sovetsky (Mid Maine Homeless Shelter), Kelly Watson (MaineHousing), Tracy Allan (Kennebec Behavioral Health), Omar Andrews (Representative Pingree's Office), Laurie Murray (MaineHousing)

Attending via GoToMeeting: Awa Conteh (City of Bangor), Amber Tierney (AroostookCAP), Donna Kelley (WaldoCAP), Elaine Grade (Knox County Homeless Coalition), Emily Flinkstrom (FairTide), Joann Oliver White (Homeless Services of Aroostook), Dan Hodgkins (Preble Street), Dave McCluskey (Community Care/Shaw House), Josh D'Alessio (PCHC), Linda Waters (City of Biddeford), Gerald Botta (HOME, Inc.), Chris Bicknell (New Beginnings), Sarah Derosier (CHCS), Heidi Bradley (CHCS), Noelle Coyne (Safe Voices), Tracy Hair (HOME, Inc.), Rebecca Hobbs (Through these Doors), Amanda Cost (Partners for Peace), Kari Bradstreet (Hope and Justice), Marcie Dean (Next Step), Julia Davidson (Caring Unlimited), Molly Sirois (Bread of Life Ministries), Aaron Geyer (City of Portland), Craig Phillips (Tedford Housing), Jen Ouellette (York County Shelters)

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.

Member Introductions: Norm welcomed everyone, and each person introduced themselves. A reminder for all those calling in - please email Scott Tibbitts to be sure you are included in the minutes.

Review & Approval of minutes: Minutes were posted on the Maine Homeless Planning website.

Bill Higgins made a motion to approve the minutes, this was seconded. There was no additional discussion. No one opposed. Minutes were accepted as presented.

Federal Updates

Cullen provided an overview. The government will shut down tonight unless there is a continuing resolution or omnibus bill. There are T-HUD Bills that have been approved in the House and Senate.

There is a SNAP bill that would impact SNAP eligibility. After a series of public comments, they are considering extending the comment period for another 14 days. Cullen asks if the group would like to comment again. The comment would state that removing food benefits does not help those living in poverty and addressing homelessness.

Donna made a motion to support commenting again. Seconded by Suzanne. There was no discussion, passes unanimously.

Cullen continued providing federal highlights, a few listed here:

- There are several activities that could impact the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, including credit improvement act which allows income averaging.
- There is a new Ending Homelessness Act to boost the Housing Trust Fund. (Kamala Harris)
- New Historic Tax Credit, to further the reach of historic tax credits (Susan Collins)

- There are Vouchers for non-elderly disabled, under the 811 program. Westbrook Housing Authority has some of these vouchers.
- There is a Runaway Homeless Youth and Trafficking Reauthorization, introduced by Senator Collins. It introduced new language to include regional equity (only one runaway youth program has been funded in NE); also language around emergency shelter beds. (See Chris Bicknell for more info.)

State Updates

- There is an Act to support emergency shelter access in Maine. \$3 million to fund Maine Shelters, in addition to ESHAP. LR2900
- There is an initiative called FUSE (Frequent User Systems Engagement) addressing the most frequent users of our various systems – shelters, jails, hospitals, etc.
- There is an effort to broaden the Tax Credit Development, Low Income Housing Tax Credits. Currently we only fund 5-6 projects/ year, but there is interest to expand this to fund 8-9 projects/ year.

NOFA Changes

Trump administration is beginning to weigh in on homelessness, which could create more partisan divide.

The NOFA changed the way HUD viewed Housing First and specific populations:

- Housing First projects: There is now a focus on folks within the projects to engage in training and employment after entry. This doesn't seem to align with the initial intent of Housing First
- There were questions last year specifically in regard to LGBTQ and LGBTQ Youth – in this most recent NOFA, the language did not specify LGBTQ, using the broader term Protected Classes.

Request of the group- Ask Senator Collins to return to the way the NOFA was written previously- Traditional Housing First and protections for LGBTQ Youth.

Aaron Geyer makes a motion to approve sending a letter to Susan Collins to return the way the NOFA addressed Housing First and protected LGBTQ Youth. Seconded by Chris Bicknell. No additional discussion. This passed unanimously.

Statewide Homeless Council

Statewide Homeless Council did not meet. In December the work is expected to focus on FUSE. The chairs are also working with a grant writer to gain some additional resources to meet their needs.

Next Meeting – Dec 10.

Long Term Stayers Update

The group talked briefly about long term stayer initiatives around the state.

Portland shared they have about 100 LTS. They noted that there is a group of people who are not able to stay at area shelters, that we are working with in addition to our traditional LTS population.

YHDP Update – Chris provided an update. Ashley- from Technical Assistance Collaborative, is working with Maine on the Youth Homeless Demonstration Project. Maine received \$3.5 Million. Over the next 2+ years Maine will use those funds to build a Youth homeless response system in Maine. Maine is one of 30 communities doing this process. Before moving forward and receiving the funds, HUD requires a strategic plan for ending youth homelessness in Maine, which includes a governance, summary of need, etc. HUD gives nine months for this to occur. This needs to be complete by April. It's a demonstration

program- innovation in design is desirable. Once this is in place, HUD will release the funds, and there will be an RFP process, and projects can apply for funding.

HUD requires the following signers to approve the plan, including: the COC, youth action board, unit of local government. HUD requires the COC to be one of these signers because HUD wants youth services to be integrated into the larger COC system. Additionally, the innovative strategies that are used for Youth may work for the larger population. The first two years they are demonstration projects, but after two years, this becomes part of your Annual Renewal Demand and renewal projects.

Timing: Initial draft due in December, final draft due in April.

The plan will need to be approved by vote by the entire COC and signed by one of the three tri-chairs.

This will be in March.

Question: Is there a youth action board? Yes. There are 30 active members in Lewiston and other communities are skyping in.

Big Thinking Topic: NOFA Debrief and Project Applicant TA Q & A

Scott reviewed a “parking lot” list developed by the NOFA Committee and addressed the status of each of the items.

Items we have done well:

- Meeting year round- the NOFA Committee now meets year-round to address and plan for NOFA related issues.
- Gaps/ Needs Analysis- this is now done but wasn’t available for last application.
- Roles/ Responsibilities – Amy and Document Review Committee have been working on roles and responsibilities for each entity. They have been reviewing the Governance, Bylaws and created Committee Charters.
- NOFA Items-
 - o Homeless Preference – HUD only asked about the two largest PHA’s in the CoC coverage area this time (used to be the top 5). Our two biggest – MaineHousing and Portland HA - both have a homeless preference in their admin plans, which is great, but we can still work on other PHAs.
 - o Move On Strategy – Again, we now have MOUs with our two biggest housing authorities, and with a couple of housing developers.
 - o Racial Disparity- we now have reports from HUD and STELLA. We also have a policy to address racial disparity and we included it as part of our NOFA submission.
 - o Annual COC wide trainings- Resource Committee has been providing annual COC trainings and have included equal access and gender equity.
 - o HMIS Bed coverage rate- still above threshold. HUD is looking for 85% or better in all categories. Shelter is the only category that hovers close to this line, at 86%. How do we get more non-participating shelter beds onboard in HMIS?
 - o System Performance Measures have been analyzed more often and with better understanding thanks to new and improved STELLA Reports.

Items we are still working on:

- Coordinated Entry
- More coordination between COC and DV providers, especially around comparable data and reporting.
- Discharge planning – our policies are old, perhaps we can re-examine this to reflect some of the new policies that are going on in the state.

- Monitoring, Scoring, Ranking process. We made some small changes to scoring and ranking, but for the most part we fell back on old ways of doing things. The NOFA committee should re-evaluate this ongoing and look to other COCs to see what we can do to improve this.

Project Applicant TA: Q & A

- There were a few projects that did not monitor well. Most of the projects are no longer funded or have been consolidated, but we still need to provide TA to others who scored low.
- Mike S. and the Monitoring Committee will come forward with a list of projects for technical assistance.

Awa shares that the Monitoring Committee is always looking for new members and invites others to join.

COC Board Updates

Amy provided a summary from the last Board meeting.

Next CES Meeting 12/18 10:00-12:00 at Shalom House

2020 PIT Update

Norm shared that the MCOC needs to approve the PIT Forms: Youth, Unsheltered, and NON HMIS. These forms were posted to MaineHomelessPlanning. There were some minor changes to the forms, but most were related to Data Standard Changes.

There was a motion to approve the forms, this was seconded by Awa. No discussion, no questions. Passed unanimously for the 2020 PIT Count.

Committee Updates

Data Committee – Data Committee created an HMIS user survey they would like to send out in December. This is a survey we are supposed to do every year, but we have fallen behind. The user survey has been posted to the MaineHomelessPlanning site. At this meeting the goal is to approve the survey and then send it to the Board for approval.

There was a motion to approve the Data Committee user survey. This was seconded. No discussion or questions. Passed unanimously.

Note: Add HMIS user survey to the Board Agenda for December.

Resource Committee– There is a Fair Housing Training on Dec 13, 9:00-11:00, a GoToMeeting link will be available. Patricia Ender from Pine Tree Legal will provide that training.

Nominations for MCOC Chairs

MCOC Chairs serve three-year staggered terms. Scott consulted past notes, and determined that the chair position that is opened is Awa's.

Scott, Vickey and Norm will be collecting nominations until December 12 at 5:00pm. If more than one nomination is received, the chairs will solicit brief Bios from each nominee. Notice of Nominations will be posted on MaineHomelessPlaning website. There will be a vote at the December MCOC Meeting.

Any other business

Craig thanked everyone who has shared their support for the tragedy that has happened at Tedford Housing. It has been a difficult time. He also shared that he is retiring from the Executive Director position at Tedford. Tedford is currently searching for new executive director.

Next Meeting: **December 19, 2019 1pm to 3pm**

Federal Legislation Update:**BUDGET & FUNDING-RELATED ITEMS**

- **FY20 Budget & Appropriations – Update** – On 11/21 President signed another short-term CR to fund the government through 12/20.
- Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and Ginnie Mae** – Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, and Ginnie Mae are all down on receipts, which will affect available funding for HUD unless Congress authorizes additional funding. Just to keep housing where it is currently, there is a \$7-8 billion gap which will need to be addressed in addition to raising the caps.
- **Senate Appropriations FY 20 THUD Bill – Update** – On 10/31, the Senate voted 84-9 to approve a spending bill for HUD programs for FY 20. The bill provides HUD programs with more than \$11.9 billion above the president's FY20 request and \$2.3 billion above FY19 enacted levels – an amount likely sufficient to renew all existing rental assistance contracts and to provide level funding or modest increases to most other programs. The bill also includes a package of amendments with bipartisan support, including several that support affordable housing in rural areas. An amendment offered by Senator Tina Smith (D-MN) would allow USDA to extend rental assistance agreements for projects financed by existing Section 514 or 515 loans for up to 20 years, ensuring residents in these properties can remain affordably housed for a longer period of time. The Senate and House will now have to conference their T-HUD bills, as there are differences between them. Detailed information on spending levels included in the Senate T-HUD bill can be found in the attached budget chart from NLIHC.
- House Appropriations FY 20 THUD Bill – No new update** – The House approved its FY20 THUD funding bill. In total, the legislation provides \$137.1 billion in budgetary resources, an increase of \$6 billion above the 2019 enacted level and \$17.3 billion above the President's budget request.

HR 2740: House Appropriations Labor, HHS, & Education Allocation Would Increase RHYA Funding – No new update – On 6/19 the House passed its H.R.2740, ‘Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, Defense, State, Foreign Operations, and Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2020’ which would fund HHS for FY 20, among other agencies. With this bill RHYA would be funded at \$147 million in FY 2020--- a 15% increase from FY 2019. This would also fund the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act (EHCY) at \$100 million---a 7% increase from FY 2019.

PROPOSED RULES

SNAP Proposed Rule (broad-based categorical eligibility) – Update – The Trump Administration is expected to reopen the public comment period on a proposed rule to end broad-based categorical eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) after new analysis from the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), SNAP's administering agency, suggested almost one million children could lose access to free school meals if the rule were implemented. It is anticipated the rule will be re-opened for 14 days. The rule received more than 127,000 comments during the 60-day comment period. Original analysis of the rule's impact indicated that, if implemented, as many as 3 million low-income people would be kicked off the program, and 500,000 children would no longer qualify for free school meals. According to the new analysis, as many as 982,000 children could be impacted by the rule change, with 497,000 children shifting from free to reduced-price meals and 40,000 children losing eligibility for the program altogether.

SNAP Proposed Rule (Utility Allowance) – New – The USDA release a proposed rule which would revise Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) regulations to standardize the methodology for calculating standard utility allowances (SUAs or standards). The proposed rule would remove state flexibility in calculating Standard Utility Allowances (SUAs) to accommodate for differences in utility costs facing SNAP households when determining monthly benefit size. By capping and standardizing SUA calculations, the proposal would result in \$4.5 billion in cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Nearly 20 percent of all SNAP households with children would see cuts to their monthly benefit. Comments are due on Monday, 12/2 and can be submitted online here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/10/03/2019-21287/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-standardization-of-state-heating-and-cooling-standard#open-comment>

→ **SNAP Proposed Rule (time limits for unemployed/underemployed) – Update** – On 12/4 the Trump Administration stated that it had finalized SNAP rule which will time limit food benefits for unemployed and underemployed people who can't document sufficient weekly work hours. They would lose SNAP eligibility after three months. States could previously waive this, however this rule would eliminate that option. The USDA estimated earlier this year that up to 750,000 people would lose SNAP benefits if this proposal took effect. Officials say that about 7% of the individuals on SNAP are considered able-bodied adults without dependents (ABWDs). The new SNAP rule will take effect on 4/1/2020.

HUD Proposed Rule amending implementing of section 214 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980, as amended (Section 214) – No new update – The proposed rule, published on 5/10 in the Federal Registrar, would bar U.S. citizens and eligible immigrants from receiving federal housing assistance if they share a home with an immigrant family member who's ineligible due their immigration status. The proposed rule would also specify that individuals who are not in eligible immigration status may not serve as the leaseholder, even as part of a mixed family whose assistance is prorated based on the percentage of members with eligible status. The current rule allows for mixed-status families; under this new rule, every single member of a household must be of “eligible immigration status.” HUD acknowledged that this rule could displace more than 55,000 children, all of whom are legal U.S. residents or citizens. Approximately 25,000 households, representing about 108,000 people, now living in subsidized housing have at least one ineligible member, according to the HUD analysis. Per Diane Yentel with NLIHC: “Tens of thousands of deeply poor kids, mostly U.S. citizens, could be evicted and made homeless because of this rule, and – by HUD’s own admission – there would be no benefit to families on the waiting list.” There is a 60-day comment period closed on 7/9/19. To view

the proposed rule go to: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/05/10/2019-09566/housing-and-community-development-act-of-1980-verification-of-eligible-status>

HUD Proposed Rule Re. Fair Housing Disparate Impact – No new update – On 8/16 HUD released a proposed rule that would make changes to fair housing rules, specifically regarding its interpretation of the Fair Housing Act's disparate impact standard. Per the NLIHC this change would "dismantle an important enforcement tool for combatting discrimination, further restricting access to housing for people of color, seniors, people with disabilities, families with children, LGBTQ people, victims of domestic violence and others." Comments were due by 10/18 and can be submitted here: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2019/08/19/2019-17542/huds-implementation-of-the-fair-housing-acts-disparate-impact-standard>

President Trump's Poverty Policy Proposal – No new update – Per CBPP: The Trump Administration yesterday [floated a proposal](#) to use a lower measure of inflation when adjusting the poverty line each year. This policy would over time cut or take away food assistance, health, and other forms of basic assistance from millions of people who struggle to put food on the table, keep a roof over their heads, and see a doctor when they need to. If the [poverty line is altered](#) in this fashion, fewer individuals and families will qualify over time for various forms of assistance, including many who work hard but are paid low wages.

BILLS

HR/S 2916 Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (RHYTPA) – New – On 11/20 Senators Susan Collins and Patrick Leahy (D-VT.), and Representatives John Yarmuth (D-KY-3), Don Bacon (R-NE-2), Jahana Hayes (D-CT-5), and Pramila Jayapal (D-WA-7) introduced the bipartisan, bicameral Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (RHYTPA). RHYTPA provides authorization for many essential local programs for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, including Basic Center Programs, Transitional Living Programs, Maternity Group Homes, and Street Outreach Programs. As authorizing legislation, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act defines the structure for these critical programs, as well as provides Congress with the legal authority to actually appropriate public dollars for the purpose of RHY grants. According to cosponsor Senator Leahy's [press release](#), RHYTPA would:

- Act to reauthorize and increase authorization levels for programs under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act;
- Increase annual competitive grants for rural youth demographics from \$100,000 to \$200,000;
- Require the Department of Health and Human Services to develop every three years a national estimate of the prevalence of homeless youth; and,
- Allow extensions in length of stay in Basic Center Programs (BCP) from 21 days, to up to 30 days.

HR 4300: Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act – Update – On 9/12 Rep. Madeline Dean (D-PA) reintroduced an improved version of the Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act to expand the availability of FUP vouchers for youth aging out of foster care. The House passed this bill on 11/18, it now goes to the Senate for consideration.

S. 2946: Pathway to Stable and Affordable Housing for All Act – New – on 11/21 Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI) introduced this bill to effectively end homelessness through robust investments in the national Housing Trust Fund, funding rental assistance, and expanded funding for homelessness programs.

 **S 1703 / HR3077: The Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2019 – New** – The Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act (AHCIA) of 2019 is sponsored by Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Ron Wyden (D-OR), and Todd Young (R-IN), and Representatives Suzan DelBene (D-WA-1), Kenny Marchant (R-TX-24), Don Beyer (D-VA-8) and Jackie Walorski (R-IN-2). Maine's entire Delegation has co-sponsored these bills, at the request of advocates in Maine. In the 115th Congress, AHCIA was cosponsored by more than 40 percent of all members of Congress. In 2018 two key provisions were enacted: a 12.5 percent Housing Credit allocation increase for four years (2018-2021), as well as "income averaging," a provision that provides flexibility to serve a broader range of low, very-low and extremely-low income families. This year's legislation builds on last year's bill, and adds several new provisions to strengthen and improve the Housing Credit. The bill is estimated to incentivize the building of over 450,000 affordable homes over the next decade, and generate \$48.5 billion in wages and business income, \$19.1 billion in additional tax revenue, and 510,000 jobs.

Key provisions reintroduced in the AHCIA of 2019:

- Increase Housing Credit allocations by 50 percent, phased in over five years, to help meet the vast and growing need for affordable housing.
- Enact a minimum 4 percent rate to parallel the minimum 9 percent rate already enacted, providing predictability to the marketplace and substantially increasing production by making more developments financially feasible.
- Enable the Housing Credit to better serve hard-to reach communities including rural, Native American, high-poverty, and high-cost communities, as well as extremely low-income tenants.
- Make the Housing Credit a more effective tool for preserving the nation's existing affordable housing inventory by simplifying and aligning rules.

New provisions in the AHCIA of 2019 that will strengthen the Housing Credit:

- Make Housing Credit properties in rural areas eligible for additional credits if needed for financial feasibility.
- Clarify that the Housing Credit and Housing Bonds can be used to develop properties specifically for veterans and other special populations.
- Better align the Housing Credit with Violence Against Women Act protections.
- Ensure cost reasonableness is considered when awarding Housing Credits.
- Enable states to maximize Private Activity Bond affordable housing resources by recycling Multifamily Housing Bonds that are used in conjunction with Housing Credits.

HR 4302: Homeless Assistance Act of 2019 – No new update – Sponsored by Rep. Sherman (D-CA). This bill would authorize public housing agencies to share certain data regarding homeless individuals and families for the provision of housing and services, and for other purposes. This House Financial Services Committee unanimously ordered the bill to be reported on 9/20.

HR 5187: Housing is Infrastructure Act of 2019 – New – Sponsored by Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA). This bill would provide \$70 billion to address the capital needs backlog for public housing and another \$32.1 billion for investments in affordable housing. This bill includes \$10 billion for a Community Development Block Grant set-aside to incentivize states and cities to eliminate impact fees and streamline the process to develop affordable homes, \$5 billion for mitigation efforts to protect communities from future disasters, \$5 billion for the national Housing Trust Fund and \$5 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership program. The legislation also includes \$2.5 billion each for the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly program, the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program and the Capital Magnet Fund and \$1 billion for the backlog of capital needs for the Section 515 and Section 514 rural housing stock. Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA) is expected to introduce companion legislation in the Senate.

→ **S 2613: Ending Homelessness Act of 2019 – New** – Introduced by Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA). The bill would establish federal grant programs to address the unmet needs of people experiencing homelessness and would authorize increased funding for existing programs including the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF), project-based rental assistance (PBRA), and project-based vouchers (PBVs).

HR 1856: Ending Homelessness Act of 2019 – No new update – Reintroduced by House Financial Services Committee Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA). This bill would provide a path to end homelessness in the United States, and for other purposes. This bill passed the House Financial Service Committee on 3/28. This legislation is a comprehensive plan to ensure the lowest-income people have safe, decent, and affordable homes. The bill invests \$13.27 billion over five years to address the shortage of affordable housing and combat homelessness by providing 410,000 new affordable homes for the lowest-income households. The bill earmarks \$1 billion annually to the national Housing Trust Fund (HTF) and \$50 million each year for rental assistance to be used in conjunction with HTF-created housing. Within Congressman Waters' bill is a 75% set-aside that will help create new supportive housing throughout the country. Additionally, this bill would permanently authorize appropriations for the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grants Act and permanently reauthorize USICH.

HR 3620: Strategy and investment in Rural Housing Preservation Act of 2019 – No new update – Introduced by Rep. Lacy Clay. This bill was passed by voice vote in the House on 9/10. This bill would permanently authorize the Multifamily Housing Preservation and Revitalization program, expand the use of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) vouchers, and create an advisory committee to help the agency develop a comprehensive strategy to maintain the agency's rental housing portfolio, which provides more than 415,000 affordable homes to low-income people living in rural areas. The bill has been received by the Senate and assigned to the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.

S 923: Fighting Homelessness Through Services and Housing Act (companion bill: HR 1978) – No new update – Sponsored by Senators Feinstein, Murkowski, and Congressmen Lieu and Stivers. This bill would bill authorize \$750 million in grants annually for the next five years for local governments. It also conditions federal funds on a grant recipient's ability to provide not only housing but also comprehensive services like mental health care, substance abuse treatment and job training.

HR 2399: Homes for Our Heroes Act – No new update – Sponsored by Rep Peters (CA-52), this bill seeks to expand HUD-VASH eligibility to Veterans who are not dishonorably discharged, but who have not received supportive housing services from Veteran's Affairs, and greater transparency about implementation.

HR 508: Trafficking Victims Housing Act of 2019 – No new update – Sponsored by Rep. Joyce Beatty. This bill would require a study and report on the housing and service needs of victims of trafficking and individuals at risk for trafficking.

HR 232: Landlord Accountability Act of 2019 – No new update – Sponsored by Rep. Nydia Velazquez. This bill would amend the Fair Housing Act, to prohibit discrimination based on use of section 8 vouchers, and for other purposes.

HR 715: HOMeS Act of 2019 – No new update – Sponsored by Rep. Steve Stivers. To amend section 428 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to provide incentives to grantees under the Continuum of Care program to re-house all former members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

S 8: Preserving Our Commitment to Homeless Veterans Act – No new update – Sponsored by Sen. Marco Rubio. This bill would require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that the supported housing program of the Department of Veterans Affairs has

HR 1724: The Higher Education Access and Success for Homeless and Foster Youth Act of 2019 (HEASHFY) (companion bill S 789) – No new update – This bill was introduced by Senators Patty Murray (D-WA) and Rob Portman (R-OH) in the Senate, and by Representatives Katherine Clark (D-MA) and Don Young (R-AK). HEASHFY amends the Higher Education Act to simplify eligibility for federal financial aid and to improve outreach, resources, and policies for homeless and foster youth. The legislation:

- Streamlines the process of applying for and receiving financial aid;
- Helps students access housing;
- Designates a higher education liaison to help students access services;
- Asks states to grant in-state tuition rates to those students who haven't had stable residency;
- Ensures that college access programs identify, recruit, and prepare homeless and foster students for college; and
- Requires the U.S. Department of Education to help resolve questions about a student's independence, simplify the FAFSA, and publish useable data and reports.

S 2615 Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act (HTC-GO) – New – Introduced by Senator Collins along with Senators Cassidy, Cardin, and Cantwell. This bill is the Senate version of the House's HTC-GO bill. The Senate bill would bring more value to Historic Tax Credit projects, improve access to the credit, and encourage investment in smaller rehabilitation projects. Key provisions of the bill:

- Increasing the credit from 20 to 30 percent for projects with rehabilitation expenses of less than \$2.5 million;
- Making it easier to meet the substantial rehabilitation test;
- Creating greater flexibility for nonprofit organizations to access HTC benefits; and
- Eliminating the HTC basis adjustment requirement which will bring more value to all HTC projects by increasing the basis of rehabilitated historic buildings for building owners and eliminating the so-called 50(d) rules.

HUD Section 811 Vouchers for Non-Elderly, Disabled (VNED) Awards – New – On 11/20, HUD announced its most recent round of awards for its Section 811 VNED voucher program, with Maine receiving a total of 85 new vouchers spread across three public housing authorities.

State Legislation Update: Cloture occurred at the end of September. The Legislative Council met on 10/23 to consider which of the 400+ submitted bills will be considered as emergency legislation in the second Legislative Session.

Housing & Services

- **LR 3086, An Act to Create a Frequent Users Systems Engagement Collaborative** – Rep. Morales. Introduced as an emergency bill in the second Legislative Session. This bill would bring together the Maine State Housing Authority, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Statewide Homeless Council, the County Jail System, the Department of Corrections, and other stakeholders to wrap services and housing around the 500 highest users of various high cost services, including emergency shelters, emergency rooms, policing, jails, and prisons, so that they can be stabilized in permanent housing and supported with services in the community. The goal of this Act is to create a coalition of stakeholders to replicate the successful FUSE program in Maine. Update: This bill was not approved by the Legislative Council to be introduced as emergency legislation. The bill sponsor has appealed this determination. Appeals will be heard on 12/6.

Homelessness Related Bills

- **LR 2900, An Act to Support Emergency Shelter Access for Persons Experiencing Homelessness in Maine** – Rep. Gattine – Introduced as an emergency bill in the second Legislative Session. This bill would provide an additional \$3 million in operations funding for Maine shelters (that would run alongside the ESHAP program, not as part of the program). Update: This bill was approved by the Legislative Council to be introduced as emergency legislation.

Color key-code: Bills highlighted in yellow have been carried over into the next Legislative Session. Bills highlighted in green have been sent to the Governor for signature but have not become public law ("held by the Governor"). Bills that became public law, previously reported in these updates, have been removed but are available upon request.

Affordable Housing

- LD 1645, An Act To Create Affordable Workforce and Senior Housing and Preserve Affordable Rural Housing – Rep. Fecteau. The purpose of this bill is to address Maine's shortage of safe, affordable housing by creating a state affordable housing tax credit. The tax credit is administered by the Maine State Housing Authority, which will allocate the state credit through a process similar to its current allocation of federal housing tax credits. This would:
 - Create more than 1,000 units of affordable housing over 8 years
 - At least 30% of credits would be targeted to housing for older Mainers
 - At least 20% of credits would be targeted to Maine's rural communities
 - Preserve some of rural Maine's most at-risk affordable housing
 - Creates jobs and critical economic activity statewide in the construction, engineering, and design sectors.**Carried over into any special or regular sessions, or both, of the 129th Legislature.**
- LD 48, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Invest in Housing for Persons Who Are Homeless (Presented by Representative BRENNAN of Portland). This bill would authorize a \$15 million bond, to go to referendum, to invest in the creation of housing for people experiencing homelessness, to be administered by MaineHousing. **Carried over into any special or regular sessions, or both, of the 129th Legislature.**

Support Services

- LD 775, An Act To Expand Community Support Services for Certain Adult Members of the MaineCare Program – Rep. Gramlich. This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend its rules in Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 17, Community Support Services to include access to services to persons who have a diagnosis of bipolar disorder, major depressive disorder, panic disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder. In practice, this would revert back to the previous Section 17 (pre-March 2016) eligibility criteria. **The bill went for the Governor's for Signature, but is being held by the Governor.**
- LD 1404, Resolve, To Provide Support Services and Funds to Prevent Homelessness – Rep. Brennan. **Carried over into any special or regular sessions, or both, of the 129th Legislature.**

- LD, 763, An Act To Ensure the Availability of Community Integration Services – Rep. Rachel Talbot-Ross. This bill provides funding to increase reimbursement rates in the Department of Health and Human Services rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter III, Section 17 for community integration services to \$24.25 per quarter-hour. This would increase the rate for Section 17 CI services. **Carried over into any special or regular sessions, or both, of the 129th Legislature.**

Food Security and Basic Safety Net Assistance:

- LD 795, Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to Food – Rep. Craig Hickman. This constitutional resolution declares that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to acquire, produce, process, prepare, preserve and consume and to barter, trade and purchase the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being. **Carried over into any special or regular sessions, or both, of the 129th Legislature – listed as Unfinished Business in the House as of 8/26.**

Other Homelessness Related Bills:

- LD 46, An Act to Establish a Substance Use Disorder Clinic at the Cumberland County Jail – Rep. Michael Brennan. This bill would provide funding (\$250,000 in each year of the biennium) to create a substance use disorder clinic at the Cumberland County jail. On 5/28 both the House and Senate passed the bill to be engrossed as amended. **Carried over into any special or regular sessions, or both, of the 129th Legislature.**
- LD 510, An Act To Authorize Funding for Transitional Housing for Women Veterans and Their Families – Rep. Bettyann Sheats. This bill would provide a one-time \$150,000 General Fund appropriation in fiscal year 2019-20 to the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management for the Betsy Ann Ross House of Hope to provide suitable housing for women veterans in transition and their families. **Carried over into any special or regular sessions, or both, of the 129th Legislature.**
- LD 866, An Act To Support College Completion by Homeless Youth in Maine – Rep. Michael Brennan, & Rep. Charlotte Warren. This bill requires institutions of higher education in the State to designate an existing staff member to serve as a liaison for homeless youth who are enrolled in that institution of higher education. The bill also requires institutions of higher education to give homeless youth priority for on-campus housing, develop a plan to provide homeless youth housing during school breaks and allow homeless youth who are enrolled part-time to access on-campus housing during the homeless youth's first year of school. The bill also expands the tuition waiver for state postsecondary educational institutions to include tuition waivers for homeless youth. **On 6/18 the bill was taken from the Special Appropriations Table and subsequently finally passed. The bill went for the Governor's for Signature, but is being held by the Governor.**
- LD 1294, Resolve, Directing the Maine Human Rights Commission To Implement a Pilot Program To Investigate and Report on Incidents of Harassment Due to Housing Status, Lack of Employment and Other Issues – Rep. Talbot-Ross. **The bill went for the Governor's for Signature, but is being held by the Governor.**