

Federal Legislation Update:

BUDGET & FUNDING-RELATED ITEMS

- ➔ **Federal Moratorium on Evictions – Update** – On 1/20/21 President Biden signed an Executive Order extending the CDC’s eviction moratorium through March 2021. The CDC’s original moratorium took effect on 9/4/20. It applies to covered tenants facing eviction for nonpayment of rent who present a signed declaration to their landlords that they meet certain income and hardship criteria. Per CBPP, among those renters not caught up on rent, some owe a substantial amount of back rent, and nearly 5 million have lost employment income during COVID-19 and expect to be evicted in coming months. Although the COVID relief package passed in December includes \$25 billion in rental assistance to help these and other renters, little or none of that money has reached people. An extension of the eviction moratorium will give states and cities more time to set up their programs and help renters pay off rental debt and provide for future payments. On 2/22, the Biden Administration released additional guidance to help states quickly distribute the \$25 billion in rental assistance, allowing people better and quicker access by removing several barriers imposed by the previous Administration. Changes include: allowing renters to self-attest to many criteria including income and housing stability, shortening the timeframe from 21 to as few as 10 days before assistance can be provided directly to tenants in cases in which landlords do not or refuse to participate in the program; expanding eligible items such as internet costs needed for remote learning and working, certain legal costs, and allowing up to 10% of funds to be used for stability services.
- ➔ **President Biden’s Executive Order Re. Urgent Health and Housing Needs of People Experiencing Homelessness – New** – On 1/21, President Biden signed an Executive Order to enable states and communities to address the urgent health and housing needs of people experiencing homelessness by directing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to fully cover (100%) the costs to move people experiencing homelessness and living in congregate shelters or encampments to safer living spaces in hotels and motels through the end of September 2021. The Executive Order also explicitly states that the 100% FEMA payments be retroactive to the beginning of the pandemic.
- ➔ **President Biden’s Executive Order to address food hardship – New** – On 1/21, President Biden signed an Executive Order which according to CBPP, aims to improve two features of COVID-related federal relief efforts already in place. First, it increases food assistance benefits provided through the new Pandemic-EBT program by about 15 percent or about \$100 more for food purchases over two months for a family with three children. Second, it seeks to improve emergency SNAP benefits, so they reach the households with the most trouble affording an adequate diet, consistent with SNAP’s core purpose of alleviating hunger and malnutrition.
- ➔ **President Biden’s Executive Order to Reverse Harmful Anti-Fair Housing Policies – New** – On 1/26, President Biden signed an Executive Order that directs HUD to reverse harmful rules implemented by the Trump administration that undermine the Fair Housing Act. The action covers two rules: one rule severely weakening HUD’s 2013 Disparate Impact rule and another replacing the 2015 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule that will do little or nothing to expand housing opportunity. The memorandum also acknowledges how the federal government has helped create segregated neighborhoods and disinvested in communities of color.
- ➔ **President Biden’s Executive Order to direct Homeland Security to review “Public Charge Rule” – New** – On 2/2, President Biden released an Executive Order directing the Departments of Homeland Security and of State to “review” the public charge rules from the Trump Administration, which per CBPP, essentially served as a “wealth test” for immigrants who want to come to, or stay in, the United States. This rule prevented many immigrants with low incomes from accessing vital state and federal resources and assistance programs, and made it hard to remain for many immigrants without substantial means who were already here. Many who sought legal entry also found it hampered their ability to unite with their family members.
- ➔ **President Biden’s Executive Order Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation & related HUD Memo re. Fair Housing Act – New** – On 1/20, President Biden released an Executive Order Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation. On 2/11 HUD announced in a memo that the HUD Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) office will administer and fully enforce the Fair Housing Act to prohibit discrimination because of sexual orientation and gender identity. This memo was issued to implement Executive Order 13988 on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation" Essentially, this means that the federally protected class of “sex” now includes sexual orientation and gender identity.
- ➔ **COVID Relief – New** – In the early hours of 2/5 the Senate passed an FY 21 budget reconciliation bill 51-50 (with Vice President Harris casting the tie-breaking vote). The bill now goes back to the House, with the Senate amendments. This is the first step toward enacting much-needed COVID relief using the fast-track “reconciliation” process for high-priority fiscal legislation. Congressional leaders are moving quickly to pass COVID-19 relief legislation in the coming weeks, with the goal of passing COVID relief prior to mid-March, before current provisions in the most recently enacted relief bills expire.
- ➔ **President Biden’s \$1.9 Trillion American Rescue Plan – Update** – President Joe Biden recently unveiled his \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 and economic recovery plan. The House’s COVID relief proposal, the American Rescue Plan Act (HR 1319), was built on the framework of the President’s proposal and includes many of its provisions (with the exception of a \$15 minimum wage). The plan calls for
- Expanded unemployment benefits for millions of people through at least September and indicates that provisions should remain in place as long as they are needed;
 - An additional \$30 billion for rental assistance (\$5 billion of which is dedicated to home energy and water costs and arrears);

- \$5 billion in emergency assistance to help secure housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness;
- Extend the recently enacted 15% increase in SNAP benefits through at least September;
- State and local government fiscal relief, including funds specifically to support schools and public colleges, funding to hire more local public health workers, and aid to help states and localities avoid laying off more people;
- Expands the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit;
- Another round of \$1,400 stimulus payments to individuals;
- Expands premium tax credits to help people afford comprehensive health coverage in the Affordable Care Act marketplaces, reducing or eliminating premiums for millions of people while expanding access to many others who are uninsured; and
- Extends to CDC's eviction moratorium until September 30, 2021.

➔ **COVID Relief Bill – American Rescue Plan Act, HR 1319 – Update** – On 2/27 the House passed the American Rescue Plan Act (HR 1319), a \$1.9 trillion COVID relief bill (very similar to President Biden's proposal – so details not included below please see the proposal above) that would provide urgently needed resources, especially so for America's lowest-income renters and people experiencing homelessness. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration, where it is expected to be amended, then sent back to the House for approval. As passed by the House, the bill provides:

- Additional direct stimulus payments to individuals and households, at \$1400 per individual making up to \$75,000 per year (which then decreases substantially for people with incomes above \$75k, with a hard cut off of \$100,000) and households that make up to \$150,000, with an additional \$1,400 per child for households with children.
- \$25 billion in rental assistance including:
 - \$19.05 billion for emergency rental assistance (ERA);
 - \$5 billion for emergency housing vouchers;
 - \$750 million for tribal housing needs; and
 - \$100 million for rural housing.
- \$5 billion for homelessness assistance through the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, a flexible funding source for affordable housing development, tenant-based rental assistance, and support services for people living in temporary housing. Of particular note, the House bill authorizes communities to acquire commercial properties such as hotels and motels — which are available at relatively low cost in many communities — and convert them to healthier non-congregate shelter, affordable housing, or supportive housing for people living in shelters or unsheltered locations.
- \$9.96 billion for homeowner assistance, and
- \$100 million for housing counseling; and
- The Education and Labor Committee's relief bill may provide an additional \$5 billion in utility assistance.

If enacted, these investments will help prevent millions of low-income people from losing their homes during the pandemic and will provide cities and states with the resources they need to help people experiencing homelessness be safely housed during and after the pandemic.

Additionally, two key tax credit provisions in the COVID relief legislation would provide significant help to vulnerable populations.

- The House's Child Tax Credit (CTC) expansion would deliver significant additional income to low-income families with children, making the full credit available to 27 million children — including roughly half of all Black and Latino children and a similar share of children who live in rural areas — whose families now don't get the full credit because their parents' earnings are too low.
 - This would lift another 4.1 million children above the poverty line, cutting the remaining number of children in poverty by more than 40 percent.
- It also contains an Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) increase for low-paid working adults not raising children in the home. This change to the EITC would expand the benefit for over 17 million adults who are not raising children at home.
 - This would raise the maximum EITC for childless adults from roughly \$530 to roughly \$1,500 and raise the income limit to qualify for the childless workers' EITC from about \$16,000 to at least \$21,000. It would also expand the age range of childless workers eligible for the tax credit to include younger adults aged 19-24 who aren't full-time students, as well as people 65 and over.
 - Bill also extends the Earned Income Tax Credit to unaccompanied homeless youth and foster youth at age 18.

Senate Republican COVID Relief Plan – No new update – A group of 10 Senate Republicans, including Senator Collins, released a \$600 billion stimulus plan, as a means to begin bipartisan negotiations with the Administration. However this plan does not include resources or protections for renters and people without homes. In addition, the plan excludes needed resources for state and local fiscal relief and reduces funding for direct stimulus checks and unemployment benefits.

FY 21 Budget – No New Update – On 12/27 former President Trump signed a package passed by Congress which included a \$1.4 trillion FY 21 omnibus spending bill, funding the government through 9/30/21.

FY 21 T-HUD Appropriations – No New Update – Senate Bill: On 12/27 former President Trump signed a package passed by Congress which included an FY 21 omnibus spending bill, funding the government through 9/30/21, including T-HUD. HUD received \$49.6 billion - more than \$12.4 billion above the president's request, and \$561 million above FY20 enacted levels, excluding Federal Housing Administration receipts. It largely funds HUD programs at or above levels proposed by the Senate in November, though not as high as levels proposed by the House. The spending bill likely provides enough funding to renew all existing voucher contracts for rental assistance. Beyond rental assistance, the spending bill provides level funding or moderate increases to all programs. The bill includes:

- \$25.77 billion for Housing Choice vouchers
- \$13.465 billion for Project-Based Section 8
- \$3 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants (\$223 million increase)
 - This increase is in addition to \$43 million for new vouchers targeted to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, including survivors of domestic or gender-based violence and veterans and their families (who are otherwise ineligible for the HUD-VASH program).
- \$3.475 billion for CDBG (a \$50 million increase)
- The bill includes substantial funding increases necessary to renew existing housing vouchers and Section 8 project-based rental assistance. (However, additional funds are likely to be needed to fully renew vouchers in 2021 because of the extraordinary cost increases caused by COVID and its economic aftermath.)
- \$1.35 billion for HOME (level funding)
- \$3.8 million for USICH
- \$136.8M for Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs
- \$100M for Youth Mentoring Grants
- \$82M for Youth Homelessness Demonstration Projects
- \$430 for HOPWA (\$20 million increase)
- \$227 for HUD Section 811 (\$25 million increase)
- The spending package also includes the “Fostering Stable Housing Opportunities Act,” which improves the accessibility of Family Unification Program (FUP) vouchers for youth aging out of foster care by allowing vouchers to be administered when needed to foster youth at risk of homelessness. It would provide voucher recipients engaged in education, training, or work-related activities the opportunity to extend the use of their vouchers from the standard 36 months to up to 60 months
- \$40 million for new VASH vouchers;
- \$25 million for new FUP vouchers;
- Increases for the Family Self-Sufficiency program and grants to address lead and other health hazards
- The bill doesn’t include legislative language approved in the House version that would halt HUD proposed rules/proposals, including the proposed anti-transgender rule change to the Equal Access Rule.
- It does not prevent changes to the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule and Disparate Impact rule.
- The bill does not prevent HUD from moving forward with its proposal for mixed-status immigrant families – including 55,000 U.S. citizen children – to separate or face eviction from HUD housing.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response – Congress and the Administration have taken measures regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Three stimulus packages have been signed into law, with Congress currently in negotiations on a fourth stimulus package.

4th Stimulus Package – Bipartisan Emergency COVID Relief Act of 2020 – No New Update – On 12/27, former President Trump signed a package passed by Congress which included the 4th stimulus bill. The package is a bipartisan \$900+ billion economic relief bill, which will provide:

- \$288 billion in another round of small business aid through the PPP program;
- Fund federal unemployment benefits at \$300 per week for 16 weeks (into April 2021);
- Direct stimulus payments based on income (\$600 per individual, \$1200 for couples, and an additional \$600 per child);
- \$25 billion in rental assistance through the Coronavirus Relief Fund
 - 90% of fund must be used for rent payments, rental arrears, utilities, utility arrears, with 10% of funds available for housing stability services;
 - Specific measures included to ensure the most in-need households receive support, with a preference for households at or below 50% AMI;
 - Can cover up to 18 months of arrears or future assistance;
- \$26 billion in nutrition/agriculture assistance – including a temporary 15% increase in SNAP through 6/30/21, expansion of the Pandemic-EBT program to cover families with children in child care, provisions to make it easier for people to qualify for SNAP (excluding pandemic Unemployment benefits as income), temporary increase in WIC, funding for senior nutrition programs including Meals on Wheels;
- \$5 billion for opioid treatment;
- Devote tens of billions of dollars to other priorities, such as child care, transportation, education, and vaccine distribution;
- Extends the deadline from December 30, 2020 to December 31, 2021 for funds provided by Congress in the CARES Act through the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF);
- Establishes a permanent floor for the 4% credit in the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. This change will make it easier to secure the financing needed for affordable housing projects and will assist in restarting stalled LIHTC projects throughout the country. Advocates estimate that the creation of a 4% floor could create as much as 126,000 rental homes in the next 10 years.
- Extension of the CDC’s Eviction Moratorium through 1/31;
- Language cancelling the FY 20 CoC NOFA.

- **Phase 4 Stimulus Ask re. Youth Homelessness – No new update** – There are two dear colleague letters circulating Congress to get increased funding for homeless youth providers. Both have bipartisan support in both chambers. Homeless youth providers and other advocates are working with Senator Collins to get her support for the Murkowski, Manchin letter
-The House Yarmuth, Bacon, Davis Dear Colleague Letter is specifically requesting:
 - \$300 million for the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) program, with \$150 million being disbursed to existing RHYA grantees and the remaining funds used to expand services through new grants.
 - \$500 million for the McKinney-Vento Act's Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program.
 - \$2 million for an online curriculum that will train parents, teachers, and students how to recognize the indicators of trafficking.
 - \$25 million in supplemental funding for existing HHS trafficking grantees to provide direct survivor support and operate the National Human Trafficking Hotline.
 - \$2 billion for a Family Stabilization Fund to provide flexible funding for community organizations to meet the unique needs of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.-The Murkowski, Manchin, Sullivan, Sinema Senate Dear Colleague Letter is specifically requesting:
 - \$25 million for existing RHYA grantees to allow 336 American communities to maintain and expand housing and services for youth and young adults at-risk of and experiencing homelessness.
 - \$75 million to fund new RHYA grants to expand services. (Only 25% of applicants receive a RHYA grant, with many applicants scoring high and not receiving a grant due to the lack of funding.)
 - \$150 million in supplemental funding to provide targeted support to children and youth experiencing homelessness through the EHCY infrastructure and service delivery system.
 - \$2 million for an online program that will train parents, educators, and students how to recognize the indicators of trafficking.
 - \$15 million in supplemental funding for existing HHS trafficking grantees to provide direct survivor support and operate the National Human Trafficking Hotline.
 - \$2 million for HHS to collect data on how increased unemployment rates and economic and social instabilities related to COVID-19 impact human trafficking, including among immigrant populations, both documented and undocumented.
 - \$800 million for a Family Stabilization Fund to provide flexible funding for community organizations to meet the unique needs of children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness. – Of note, Senator Collins has lent her support to this specific measure.
- **"CARES Act" 3rd Stimulus package:** The President signed the nearly \$2 trillion stimulus package to combat the economic fallout of the coronavirus outbreak, including direct payments to most Americans and a half-trillion-dollar fund to shore up struggling companies. Additionally, language in the bill included "None of the funds provided...may be used to require people experiencing homelessness to receive treatment or perform any other prerequisite activities as a condition for receiving shelter, housing, or other services." This ensures the integrity of the Housing First model is retained for HUD programs.
HUD funding & funding to address homelessness in the bill:
 - More than \$6.5 billion in Federal funding for CDBG, the Economic Development Administration, and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership to help mitigate the local economic crisis and rebuild impacted industries such as tourism or manufacturing supply chains.
 - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – \$5 billion
 - Homeless Assistance Grants – \$4 billion.
 - Section 8 Tenant-Based Rental Assistance – \$1.25 billion.
 - Project-Based Rental Assistance – \$1 billion
 - \$450 million for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
Other individual assistance:
 - \$15.5 billion to help cover increased demand for SNAP.
 - \$8.8 billion for child food assistance

BILLS

➔ **S 3923 Emergency Family Stabilization Act – New** – This bill was introduced by Sen. Murkowski (R-AK) on 2/4, with Senators Collins, Manchin (D-WV), Sullivan (R-AK), Sinema (D-AZ), Shaheen (D-NH), Schatz (D-HI), Hassan (H-NH), Casey (D-PA), Hirono (D-HI), and Kelly (D-AZ) signing on as original co-sponsors. It would establish a competitive grant program within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for family stabilization agencies to provide emergency relief to children, youth, and families experiencing homelessness. Recipients may use grant funds for, among other purposes, personnel costs, personal protective equipment, and other supplies to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (i.e., coronavirus disease 2019), as well as payments for security deposits and other housing-related needs. This bill would provide flexible funding during the COVID-19 pandemic to support community-based organizations already serving unaccompanied homeless youth, with a focus on meeting the needs of unsheltered youth, youth sharing housing due to deep poverty, pregnant and parenting youth, and youth experiencing domestic violence and human trafficking.

HR 7301 The Emergency Housing Protections and Relief Act of 2020 – No new update – The House passed this bill on 6/29, which includes a package of critically needed emergency housing resources and protections to help keep renters in their homes and to

address the health and safety of people experiencing homelessness. The bill includes the housing and homelessness resources approved by the House in the HEROES Act, including many top priorities:

- \$100 billion in emergency rental assistance;
- A national, uniform moratorium on evictions and foreclosures;
- \$11.5 billion to prevent and respond to outbreaks among people experiencing homelessness; and
- Additional needed resources to ensure housing stability.

State Legislation Update: *The 130th Legislature convened on Wednesday, 12/2.*

- **Prioritizing People Experiencing Homelessness for COVID-19 Vaccines – *No new update*** – As COVID-19 vaccines are nearing distribution to those at highest risk of contracting the virus, it would be beneficial for CoCs to urge their state health departments to prioritize people experiencing homelessness and the workers who serve them. You can inform state authorities about how people experiencing homelessness are uniquely at severe risk for contracting COVID-19, given the prevalence of risk factors in homeless populations, including racial disparities. The initial distribution of vaccines to those at highest risk of COVID-19 will save lives and reduce the rate of community spread - especially among people experiencing homelessness. CoCs are encouraged to contact their state and local health departments to advocate for this prioritization. Click here to learn more about national and state vaccine plans: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/covid19-vaccination-guidance.html> Click here for Maine’s plan: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/maine-jurisdiction-executive-summary.pdf>

Governor Mills’ Executive Orders and Programs re. COVID-19

- **Maine COVID-19 Rent Relief Program:** The Governor’s rent relief program, which had been put on pause at the end of September, is now accepting applications again. Eligible renters may apply for help with paying their October and November rents – up to \$1,000 per month. A key update to the program is that every eligible renter in Maine, regardless of what town they live in or whether or not they live in a property that was financed with low income housing tax credits, can now apply through one common point of entry which is through the Cap Agencies, link here: <https://mecap.org/rent>. The only exception to this rule is for tenants who live in Lewiston, who should continue to seek rent relief [through the City of Lewiston](#) because their CARES Act rent relief funds have not been fully exhausted yet. Once the city funds are exhausted, renters can then apply through the Cap Agency link above. For more details on the state rent relief program, [click here](#).
- **Evictions:** On 4/16, Governor Mills issued an [Executive Order](#) that, when taken in combination with a March 18 order issued by the Maine Court System, will prevent the immediate eviction of tenants other than those who engage in dangerous or unlawful conduct for the duration of the state of emergency. On 7/30, Governor Mills signed an Executive Order extending protections for renters in the eviction process., as Maine courts are beginning to reopen next week. The order allows evictions scheduled before the pandemic and that are unrelated to the pandemic to move forward. The order requires landlords to provide at least 45 days’ notice for a tenant to leave, rather than 30 under Maine law. It also extends an eviction notice timeframe from 7 to 30 days.

➔ **LD 42: Supplemental Budget & LD 221: 2022-2023 BIENNIAL BUDGET – *New*** – Per the [Governor’s Press Release on 1/8](#), the Governor “submitted to the Legislature a supplemental budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2021 and a biennial budget proposal for Fiscal Years 2022-2023 that focus on maintaining vital services and increasing savings without creating new programs. The budgets are balanced as required by the Constitution and continue efficiencies, good fiscal management and curtailments to cover projected revenue shortfalls for all three fiscal years. The budgets do not change Maine tax rates and do not dip into the Budget Stabilization Fund; in fact they add to the state’s savings in order to preserve a solid financial foundation for the State. The proposed budgets focus on combatting the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to rebuild the State’s public health infrastructure and protecting essential health care, education, and life-saving services.” “Despite the projected revenue shortfall, the Governor was able to maintain critical services for Maine people with the [responsible fiscal moves she and the Legislature made](#) last year, along with [prudent management of Departmental spending](#) throughout the pandemic, and significant Federal support for Maine’s economy and for Maine people that improved revenue projections. For a deeper analysis of the State Budget during the pandemic, please see the [attached explainer and timeline \(PDF\)](#).” The Governor’s complete proposals is available on the [Bureau of the Budget website](#). The Governor’s [letter to the Legislature regarding the budget submission is here \(PDF\)](#).

➔ **The Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee has begun holding public hearings on the Supplemental Budget. The Committee’s Calendar can be found here:** <http://legislature.maine.gov/committee/#Committees/AFA>

➔ *Committees will not be receiving testimony at the State House complex at this time and will be conducting all meetings electronically. To register to provide oral testimony over the electronic platform or via a toll-free phone number, contact the committee clerk (AFA Clerk: Marianne.MacMaster@legislature.maine.gov). To provide oral testimony, register no later than 30 minutes prior to the posted start time of the meeting; registrations received after that time will be accepted at the discretion of the committee chairs. For more information visit <http://legislature.maine.gov> Committee meetings may be heard at www.mainelegislature.org or viewed at www.youtube.com/mainestatelegislature.*

Public Hearings for the Biennial Budget in front of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs (AFA) Committee begin Tuesday, 2/16.

Committees will not be receiving testimony at the State House complex at this time and will be conducting all meetings electronically. Written testimony can be provided through the Legislative website <http://legislature.maine.gov/> (there’s a testimony submission button at the bottom of the page.) To register to provide oral testimony over the electronic platform or via a toll-free phone number, please contact the committee clerk at afa@legislature.maine.gov.

- Thursday, 2/18, at 10am, joint meeting of AFA and the HHS Committee, budget line items pertaining to DHHS (including General Assistance);

- Thursday, 2/18, at 1pm, with a joint meeting of AFA and the HHS Committee, budget line items pertaining to DHHS (including SUD and adult mental health);
- Thursday, 2/25, at 1pm, with a joint meeting of AFA and the Labor and Housing Committee, budget line items pertaining to MaineHousing.

➔ **Bills:** Please note that the bills listed below have only been submitted as bill titles in concept form. Once bills are printed, out of the Revisor's office with LD numbers assigned, and bill text/summary information is available, the information below will be updated accordingly.

Homelessness

- **LD 81 An Act To Ensure the Safety of Children Experiencing Homelessness by Extending Shelter Placement Periods**, Rep. Meyer – This bill amends the laws governing facilities for children. It amends the definition of "emergency children's shelter" to extend placement from 30 consecutive days or less to 60 consecutive days or less, and it amends the definition of "shelter for homeless children" to extend the limit on overnight lodging and supervision from 30 consecutive overnights to 60 consecutive overnights. – Public Hearing with the HHS Committee was held on Thursday, 2/11 at 9am.
- **LD 175 An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Create and Enhance Regional Homeless Shelters**, Rep. Cloutier – The funds provided by this bond issue, in the amount of \$50,000,000, will be used to create and enhance regional homeless shelters. – Referred to Appropriations Committee
- **LR 1830 An Act To Support the Operations of Youth Shelters in Maine**, Sen. Libby
- **LR 1651 An Act To Authorize Shelters That Serve Women To Refuse Access to Persons Who Are Transgender**, Sen. Keim
- **LD 211 An Act To Support Emergency Shelter Access for Persons Experiencing Homelessness**, Rep. Cloutier – This bill includes ongoing General Fund appropriations of \$3,000,000 per year to the Shelter Operating Subsidy program within the Maine State Housing Authority to support operations and capacity at low-barrier emergency homeless shelters across the State. This bill specifies that the funding is supplemental to the Maine State Housing Authority's emergency shelter and housing assistance program and is to be delivered outside of the funding formula set forth in the Maine State Housing Authority's rule under 99-346 C.M.R. Chapter 19, Homeless Solutions Rule. – Public Hearing in front of the Labor and Housing Committee was held on Wednesday, 2/17 at 10 am.
- **LR 1540 An Act To Prevent Homelessness Caused by COVID-19**, Rep Drinkwater
- **LD 654 An Act To Create a Low Barrier Shelter Capital Project Funding Program**, Rep Arford – This bill establishes the Twenty-four-hour Shelter Capital Project program within the Maine State Housing Authority to support new construction or expansion of emergency 24-hour shelters for persons experiencing homelessness. New construction and expansion projects funded by the program must address an increase in the need for shelter capacity in the region since the construction, or expansion, of an existing shelter or shelters in the region or since the start of the outbreak of COVID-19 or both. The bill includes a one-time General Fund appropriation of \$3,000,000 in fiscal year 2021-22 to the Maine State Housing Authority to fund the program. This bill specifies that the funding is supplemental to funding for the Maine State Housing Authority's emergency shelter and housing assistance program.
- **LR 1910 An Act To Ensure the Provision of Housing Navigation Services to Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities**, Sen Curry
- **LR 1680 An Act To Decriminalize Homelessness**, Rep Morales

Housing/Rental Assistance

- **LD 475 Resolve, To Create the Frequent Users System Engagement Collaborative**, Rep. Morales – This resolve establishes the Frequent Users System Engagement Collaborative in order to develop a plan to provide stable housing and community services to 200 persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness who are the most frequent consumers of high-cost services, such as psychiatric hospitals, emergency shelters, emergency rooms, police, jails and prisons. The collaborative must submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services no later than January 1, 2022 on its plan and recommendations. The Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services is authorized to report out a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature related to the report. – Referred to the HHS Committee.
- **LD 473 An Act To Create the Maine Rental Assistance and Voucher Program**, Rep. Morales – This bill requires the Maine State Housing Authority to establish and administer the Maine Rental Assistance and Voucher Guarantee Program. The program must include a rental assistance component to assist individuals with the cost of rent and a rental voucher guarantee component to encourage landlords to work with the program and other rental assistance programs in the State. The bill also creates the Maine Rental Assistance and Voucher Guarantee Program Fund under the Maine State Housing Authority to carry out the program. The bill includes a General Fund appropriation of \$8,500,000 to the fund in fiscal year 2021-22 and fiscal year 2022-23. – Public Hearing Wednesday, March 3, 2021 10:00 AM, HHS Committee.
- **LR 1158 An Act To Streamline Requests for MaineCare Services, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Assistance, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and Housing Assistance**, Rep Morales
- **LR 1923 An Act To Preserve Fair Housing in Maine**, Rep Talbot Ross – This bill preserves the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Rule in Maine, removing the effects of the 9/8/2020 Preserving Community and Neighborhood Choice Rule in this state, in order to prevent discrimination in housing.

- **LD 50 An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Invest in Housing for Persons Who Are Homeless**, Rep. Brennan - The funds provided by this bond issue, in the amount of \$15,000,000, will be used for capital construction costs for housing for persons who are homeless. – *Referred to Appropriations Committee*
 - **LR 612 An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Promote the Construction of Energy-efficient Affordable Housing**, Rep. Babbidge
 - **LR 1237 An Act To Expand Access to Quality Substance Use Disorder Recovery Residence Services**, Rep. Fecteau
 - **LR 1582 An Act To Prohibit Discrimination in Housing Based on a Person's Source of Income**, Rep. Collings
 - **LR 25 An Act Regarding Reentry Housing and To Address the Risk of Homelessness**, Rep. Talbot Ross
 - **LR 295 An Act To Assist Public School Students and Families Who Are Homeless**, Rep. Brennan
 - **LR 947 An Act To Comprehensively Address Homelessness and Affordable Housing in Maine**, Rep Morales
 - **LR 1109 An Act To Create a Pathway to Housing Stability for Those at Risk of Entering and for Those Exiting Corrections Systems**, Rep. Morales
 - **LR 1346 An Act To Prevent Homelessness by Permanently Establishing the Emergency Rental Relief Fund**, Rep Lookner
 - **LR 873 An Act To Prevent Homelessness by Establishing an Eviction Mediation Program**, Sen Carney
- Services**
- **LD 48 Resolve, To Require the Department of Health and Human Services To Request a Waiver Relating to Support Services and To Provide Funds To Prevent Homelessness**, Rep. Brennan – This resolve requires the Department of Health and Human Services to apply to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for a waiver from the requirements of federal law and regulations to allow Maine to provide Medicaid-funded direct support services to individuals experiencing homelessness. In addition, the resolve provides ongoing funds to the Housing First Assistance Program established within the Maine State Housing Authority to be distributed to community action agencies to assist individuals on the verge of becoming homeless. *Referred to HHS Committee.*
 - **LR 1420 An Act To Address the Complexity of Substance Use Disorder in Youth**, Rep Morales
 - **LR 235 An Act To Provide Services to Maine's Most Vulnerable Citizens**, Sen. Keim
 - **LD 415 Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services To Increase MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Targeted Case Management Services To Reflect Inflation**, Rep. Stearns – This resolve requires the Department of Health and Human Services to amend its rules 39 governing MaineCare reimbursement for targeted case management services to provide an 40 increase reflecting cost increases from 2010 to 2020. – **Referred to the HHS Committee.**
 - **LD 582 An Act To Support the Fidelity and Sustainability of Assertive Community Treatment**, Rep. Madigan – This bill modifies the definition of "assertive community treatment" to better align the definition with an evidence-based treatment model. The bill adds definitions of "psychiatric provider" and "medical assistant" and changes the description of the composition of the multidisciplinary teams that provide assertive community treatment. The bill also requires the Department of Health and Human Services to increase the MaineCare reimbursement rates for assertive community treatment by 25% immediately to allow providers to continue to offer the service. The bill also requires the department to adopt rules to transition to a per member, per month payment model and to reform the criteria and operation of the program to ensure its fidelity to the evidence-based model for assertive community treatment services. – *Referred to HHS Committee.*
 - **LD 196 Resolve, To Ensure Access to Community Mental Health Services**, Sen. Breen – This resolve directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend its rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter III, Sections 17 and 65 to increase reimbursement rates for daily living support services and any home and community-based services provided by behavioral health professionals by 15%. It requires that the department ensure that the increase in reimbursement rates be applied to ensure providers are located in a sufficient geographical range for MaineCare members to access services and so that providers can maintain the services provided to MaineCare members. – *Referred to HHS Committee.*
 - **LD 512 An Act to Provide Intensive Case Managers to Counties That Do Not Have County Jails or Regional Jails**, Rep. Dodge – This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to create additional intensive case manager positions so that counties that do not have a county jail or regional jail will have an intensive case manager. An intensive case manager oversees persons who are detained by a law enforcement officer and who have intellectual disabilities or mental health conditions or have misused substances and connects them to the services for which they qualify, works with the court system to ensure that they receive due process and speedy trials and assists persons who qualify for the MaineCare program to apply for and receive MaineCare benefits and services while being detained or incarcerated, including during the implementation of diversion and reentry plans. – *Referred to HHS Committee.*
 - **LD 360, Resolve, To Reduce Barriers to Recovery from Addiction by Expanding Eligibility for Targeted Case Management Services**, Rep. Madigan – This resolve directs the Department of Health and Human Services to amend its rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 13.03-4 to remove from the eligibility requirements for targeted case management services for adults with substance use disorder the provision regarding pregnancy, living with minor children and intravenous drug use.

General Assistance

- **LR 1419 An Act To Improve Housing Security by Improving Access to General Assistance**, Rep. Morales
- **LR 1571 An Act To Ease the Burden of Access in the Information Age for Individuals in Need of General Assistance**, Sen. Brenner
- **LR 937 Resolve, To Reestablish the Committee To Study the Feasibility of Creating Basic Income Security**, Rep. Meyer

- **LR 284 An Act To Amend the General Assistance Laws Governing Reimbursement**, Rep. Brennan
Food Insecurity
- **LD 95 RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Establish a Right to Food**, Rep. Faulkingham – This constitutional resolution declares that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to grow, raise, harvest, produce and consume the food of their own choosing for their own nourishment, sustenance, bodily health and well-being. – Public Hearing was held in front of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee on 2/23.
- **LR 19 An Act To Ensure That Persons Qualified To Receive Food Assistance Are Able To Receive Full Benefits**, Rep. Talbot Ross