

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 215

H.P. 138

House of Representatives, January 21, 2025

An Act to Establish a Program to Assist Residents of Large Recovery Residences

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

Robert B. Hunt
ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative HASENFUS of Readfield.
Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §20059** is enacted to read:

3 **§20059. Recovery residence rental assistance program**

4 **1. Recovery residence rental assistance program.** The recovery residence rental
5 assistance program, referred to in this section as "the program," is established within the
6 department to provide assistance with rental fees for eligible individuals to reside in a
7 certified recovery residence under section 20057 that has the capacity to serve 20 or more
8 residents at one time. The department shall contract with a nonprofit organization in the
9 State that certifies recovery residences to administer the program.

10 **2. Eligibility.** The program must provide assistance to eligible individuals for an
11 amount equal to the monthly rent in a certified recovery residence for an individual who:

12 A. Resides or has been accepted to reside in a certified recovery residence; and

13 B. Would otherwise be eligible, as determined by the relevant municipality, for general
14 assistance pursuant to Title 22, section 4309 at the time of acceptance under paragraph
15 A.

16 The department shall determine the period of eligibility for a person receiving rental
17 assistance under this subsection.

18 **3. Recovery residence rental assistance fund.** The recovery residence rental
19 assistance fund is established within and administered by the department to support the
20 program. Assistance under the program must be disbursed directly from the fund to the
21 certified recovery residence for an eligible individual approved for the program in
22 accordance with subsection 2. The fund is funded by appropriations, allocations and other
23 public and private sources. The fund is interest-bearing, and interest accrued on the money
24 in the fund accrues to the fund. The fund does not lapse but carries over to the next fiscal
25 year.

26 **4. Rules.** The department shall adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this section.
27 Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in chapter
28 375, subchapter 2-A.

29 **Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §4309, sub-§6,** as amended by PL 2023, c. 133, §3, is further
30 amended to read:

31 **6. Eligibility; recovery residence; ~~exception~~ exceptions.** The overseer in a
32 municipality may not deny general assistance to a person for the sole reason that the person
33 is residing in a recovery residence, ~~except that a person who is receiving rental assistance~~
34 pursuant to Title 5, section 20059 is not eligible for housing assistance under this section.
35 ~~Beginning July 1, 2022,~~ a A municipality may not provide housing assistance to a person
36 residing in a recovery residence that has not been certified in accordance with Title 5,
37 section 20005, subsection 22, except that the person may receive housing assistance while
38 residing in an uncertified recovery residence for one 30-day period only and the overseer
39 shall inform the person of the requirements of this subsection. A person who is ineligible
40 for housing assistance under this subsection may remain eligible to receive general
41 assistance for other basic necessities. Upon request by a person residing in a certified
42 recovery residence who has been determined eligible for housing assistance, a municipality

1 shall issue a housing assistance payment to the operator of the certified recovery residence
2 instead of to a landlord.

3 **Sec. 3. Rental assistance for certified recovery residences.** The Department of
4 Health and Human Services and the Maine State Housing Authority shall jointly develop
5 the recovery residence rental assistance program as required by the Maine Revised Statutes,
6 Title 5, section 20059.

7 **SUMMARY**

8 This bill establishes a rental assistance program within the Department of Health and
9 Human Services to support persons who are residing in certified recovery residences that
10 have the capacity to serve 20 or more residents at one time. The rental assistance, equal to
11 the monthly rent, is paid directly to the recovery residence for the eligible person. The
12 person must be otherwise eligible for municipal general assistance. If the eligible person
13 receives the rental assistance, the person is not eligible for housing assistance under the
14 municipal general assistance program.