

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1910

S.P. 751

In Senate, May 6, 2025

An Act to Strengthen Housing Stability Services by Increasing Support and Outreach

Reference to the Committee on Housing and Economic Development suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary of the Senate.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland.
Cosponsored by Representative YUSUF of Portland and
Senator: CURRY of Waldo, Representatives: GOLEK of Harpswell, JULIA of Waterville,
MALON of Biddeford.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §20-B** is enacted to read:

3 **§20-B. Services to prevent homelessness**

4 The department shall contract with community-based nonprofit organizations with
5 experience in outreach, engagement and social service delivery to individuals and families
6 experiencing homelessness in order to hire outreach caseworkers and housing stability
7 workers to work with individuals who are unhoused or experience chronic homelessness
8 by cycling through emergency settings such as shelters, jails, hospitals and warming
9 centers. The outreach caseworkers and housing stability workers shall assist individuals to
10 attain permanent housing, ensure ongoing support services once the individuals are housed
11 and ensure that unhoused individuals are in safe indoor spaces provided by emergency
12 shelters while housing is being secured.

13 **Sec. 2. Department of Health and Human Services contracts for outreach**
14 **caseworkers.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall issue a request for
15 proposals to contract for outreach caseworker services as required by the Maine Revised
16 Statutes, Title 22, section 20-B. The contracts with community-based nonprofit
17 organizations must be sufficient to hire 9 outreach caseworkers. The department must
18 contract with organizations that have experience in outreach, engagement and social
19 service delivery to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The contracts
20 issued under this section must be for a period of time set by the department, and the
21 department may renew the contracts at the end of the set period. The contracts must include
22 the following requirements.

23 1. Nine outreach caseworkers must be hired.

24 2. The caseworkers must work with unhoused individuals to attain permanent housing,
25 ensure ongoing support services once the individuals are housed and ensure that unhoused
26 individuals are in safe indoor spaces provided by emergency shelters while housing is being
27 secured.

28 3. The caseworkers must be distributed across the State, as determined by agreement
29 between the 3 regional homeless councils represented on the Statewide Homeless Council,
30 and targeted to areas that have the greatest concentration of unhoused individuals. As
31 circumstances change, the caseworkers may be redistributed geographically.

32 4. The caseload for the caseworkers must be up to 25 individuals with intensive needs
33 and up to 35 additional cases that require less intensive but ongoing support.

34 **Sec. 3. Department of Health and Human Services contracts for housing**
35 **stability workers.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall issue a request
36 for proposals to contract for housing stability workers as required by the Maine Revised
37 Statutes, Title 22, section 20-B. The contracts with community-based nonprofit
38 organizations must be sufficient to hire 9 housing stability workers. The department must
39 contract with organizations that have experience in outreach, engagement and social
40 service delivery to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The contracts
41 issued under this section must be for a period of time set by the department, and the
42 department may renew the contracts at the end of the set period. The contracts must include
43 the following requirements.

- 1 1. Nine housing stability workers must be hired.
- 2 2. The housing stability workers must work with individuals experiencing chronic
- 3 homelessness cycling through various emergency settings, such as shelters, jails, hospitals
- 4 and warming centers, and provide those individuals with intensive housing or rehousing
- 5 services to ensure housing stability.
- 6 3. The housing stability workers must be distributed across the State, as determined by
- 7 agreement between the 3 regional homeless councils represented on the Statewide
- 8 Homeless Council, and targeted to areas that have the greatest concentration of individuals
- 9 experiencing chronic homelessness. As circumstances change, the workers may be
- 10 redistributed geographically.
- 11 4. The caseload for the housing stability workers must be up to 25 individuals with
- 12 intensive needs and up to 35 additional cases that require less intensive but ongoing
- 13 support.

14 **Sec. 4. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
15 allocations are made.

16 **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF**

17 **Purchased Social Services 0228**

18 Initiative: Provides funding to contract with community-based nonprofit organizations to
19 hire 9 outreach caseworkers.

20 GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
21 All Other	\$800,000	\$800,000
22		
23 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$800,000</u>	<u>\$800,000</u>

24 **Purchased Social Services 0228**

25 Initiative: Provides funding to contract with community-based nonprofit organizations to
26 hire 9 housing stability workers.

27 GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
28 All Other	\$900,000	\$900,000
29		
30 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$900,000</u>	<u>\$900,000</u>

31

32 **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,**
33 **DEPARTMENT OF**
34 **DEPARTMENT TOTALS**

35	2025-26	2026-27
36 GENERAL FUND	\$1,700,000	\$1,700,000
37		
38 DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	<u>\$1,700,000</u>	<u>\$1,700,000</u>

39

SUMMARY

40 This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to contract with
41 community-based nonprofit organizations through a request for proposals process for 9

1 outreach caseworkers and 9 housing stability workers. The outreach caseworkers and
2 housing stability workers provide housing and supportive services to individuals who are
3 unhoused and chronically homeless, as well as ensuring that the individuals are in safe
4 indoor environments while awaiting permanent housing. The contracted workers are
5 distributed around the State and targeted to areas with higher populations of individuals
6 who are homeless. The bill requires ongoing appropriations of \$800,000 each year for
7 outreach caseworkers and \$900,000 each year for housing stability workers.