

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 29 FY 08/09
DATE April 13, 2009

**AN ORDER TO FACILITATE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND RECOMMEND
EFFICIENCIES AND SIMPLICIFICATIONS IN THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC
BENEFITS TO HELP MAINE WEATHER THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN**

WHEREAS, the current national economic forecast predicts a continued downward spiral; and

WHEREAS, working hard no longer assures that a family will be able to make ends meet; and

WHEREAS the combination of rising prices for basic needs and falling incomes has many families in an economic vise; and

WHEREAS, nearly one-third of Maine's population is living in or near poverty and this number will likely increase due to the prevailing economic environment; and

WHEREAS, Maine's front line public benefit workers are overburdened by growing caseloads; and

WHEREAS, upgrading existing application and eligibility procedures for public benefit programs would remove burdensome and outdated processes and increase federal dollars flowing into the state; and

WHEREAS, new technology exists that would eliminate duplication of effort, reduce unnecessary obstacles, and consolidate eligibility data between programs; and

WHEREAS, economic realities make it imperative to make the best use of new technologies and community partners; and

WHEREAS, one of the State of Maine's most important responsibilities and profound duties is to provide for the safety and security of all Maine people.

NOW THEREFORE, I, John E. Baldacci, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services to convene a work group to offer solutions that will increase Maine's share of available federal dollars by identifying and accessing untapped federal resources and streamlining and upgrading the procedures and

technology used to determine access to public benefits in the State of Maine, while assuring the integrity of those public benefit programs.

Purpose

In order to assist hard working families struggling in difficult economic times, the work group will convene a diverse group of individuals and organizations to identify and access federal dollars available to Maine to boost family resources and the State's economy. In addition, the work group will implement the necessary steps needed to update and coordinate community and statewide systems, including new technology to improve access, streamline administrative procedures and the delivery of services.

Membership

The work group shall be comprised of representatives from the following departments, agencies, consumer groups and community partners:

- The Commissioner of the DHHS or designee, who shall serve as Chair
- The Director of the Office of Integrated Access and Support or designee
- A representative from a municipal office responsible for the delivery of assistance to people in need and community health initiatives or designee
- A representative from an organization that represents the interests of seniors
- The Executive Director of the Disability Rights Center
- A representative of a statewide non-profit organization representing individuals with low income
- A representative from the Maine Community Action Association or designee

The work group may call on representatives from any government agency or other organization not otherwise represented on the work group to provide information or to participate fully in the work group when, in the work group's discretion, that representative has responsibilities or expertise in a particular area that would assist the work group in carrying out its duties.

The work group shall meet at times and places called by the Chair. Members of the work group shall serve without compensation.

Duties

Consistent with the purpose of this Executive Order, the work group shall:

- 1) Identify and implement additional opportunities to take advantage of federal resources available to help Maine people weather these difficult economic times and serve as economic stimulus in Maine.

- 2) Update, simplify and integrate eligibility and delivery systems, including technology, in order to streamline and expedite the application process and delivery of benefits as well as consolidate and improve coordination of existing programs.
- 3) Facilitate coordination among departments, agencies and community partners to create multiple points of entry to improve access to benefits and tax credits and eliminate redundancy in the eligibility determination and delivery systems for public benefits.

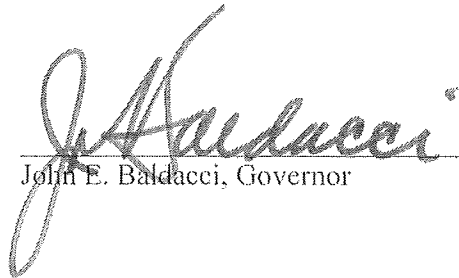
By June 1, 2009, the work group shall develop a timeframe by which the initiatives described in the above duties shall be implemented. By December 31, 2009, the work group shall provide a report to the Governor detailing the progress of its work, recommendations to the Governor, and any outstanding issues that the group will continue to examine.

Implementation Costs

The costs for implementing the duties included in this Executive Order shall be absorbed by the participating State agencies.

Effective Date

The effective date of this Executive Order is April 13, 2009.



John E. Baldacci, Governor