

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the  
**LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY**  
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library  
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied  
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)



# 118th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## SECOND REGULAR SESSION-1998

---

Legislative Document

No. 2283

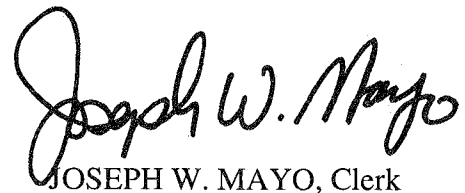
H.P. 1651

House of Representatives, March 19, 1998

**An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Interagency Task  
Force on Homelessness and Housing Opportunities.**

---

Reported by Representative MITCHELL for the Joint Standing Committee on Health and  
Human Services pursuant to Joint Order H.P. 1644.

  
JOSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

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

2           **Sec. 1. 30-A MRSA §5044, sub-§4**, as enacted by PL 1989, c.  
4           601, Pt. B, §4, is amended to read:

6           **4. Serve as coordinator of information.** Serve as a  
8           coordinator of information and communication among state agencies  
and among the state, municipal and private sectors with respect  
to this chapter; and

10           **Sec. 2. 30-A MRSA §5044, sub-§5**, as amended by PL 1991, c.  
12           610, §19, is further amended to read:

14           **5. Assistance to homeless.** In cooperation with the state  
16           authority, identify the resources available to the homeless and  
persons with special needs, identify the gaps in delivery  
18           services to this population and make recommendations concerning  
the policies and programs serving this population; and

20           **Sec. 3. 30-A MRSA §5044, sub-§6** is enacted to read:

22           **6. Review and monitor plans.** Review and comment on plans  
24           submitted pursuant to Title 34-B, section 1221. The interagency  
task force must notify the Maine State Housing Authority and the  
26           Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance  
Abuse Services that those plans have been submitted and provide  
to that department a copy of the plans and the interagency task  
28           force's comments on the plans. The interagency task force shall  
monitor the implementation of the plans and report its findings  
30           to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having  
jurisdiction over health and human services matters by January  
32           1st of each year. The report may include any legislation the  
interagency task force recommends.

34           **Sec. 4. 34-B MRSA §1221** is enacted to read:

36           **§1221. Plans for the homeless**

38           The regional housing coordinator for each region shall  
40           convene a working group annually to develop a plan that states  
how mental health or substance abuse services needed by  
42           individuals using homeless shelters will be provided. Each  
working group shall submit a plan annually to the local quality  
44           improvement council established pursuant to section 3607. The  
local quality improvement council shall review the plan and  
46           submit it, with any suggested changes, to the Interagency Task  
Force on Homelessness and Housing Opportunities, established  
48           pursuant to Title 30-A, section 5041.

2       1. Working group. The working group in each region  
consists of the following members:

4       A. Representatives of homeless shelter operators that  
6       receive shelter operating subsidy funds from the Housing  
      Opportunities for Maine Fund designated by the Maine State  
      Housing Authority;

8       B. Representatives of mental health provider agencies  
10      designated by the department;

12      C. Representatives of providers of substance abuse services  
14      designated by the department;

16      D. The regional housing coordinators; and

18      E. Representatives of the boards of directors of the  
      entities listed in paragraphs A, B and C designated by the  
20      boards of directors.

22      2. Plan contents. Each plan must be designed to meet local  
needs and must include, but is not limited to, the following  
24      components:

26      A. An overview of local service area needs;

28      B. A review of the factors that lead to homelessness, the  
      barriers to permanent housing and the clinical needs of  
30      individuals using homeless shelters based upon discussions  
      with those persons; and

32      C. Procedures for referrals, treatment planning,  
34      information sharing, clinical services, training for shelter  
      and mental health services providers and consumer  
36      satisfaction with shelter services and mental health  
      services.

38      **Sec. 5. Study and report on the problems of homeless youth.** The  
Task Force on Homelessness and Housing Opportunities shall  
40      prepare a report examining the causes of homelessness among youth  
and young adults, existing efforts to address those causes, the  
42      strengths and weaknesses of the current homeless shelter system,  
anticipated needs of youth and young adults and conditions in the  
44      shelters and any recommended legislation. The interagency task  
force shall submit its report to the joint standing committee of  
46      the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human  
services matters in the First Regular Session of the 119th  
48      Legislature.

**Sec. 6. Training.** The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, in conjunction with the Maine State Housing Authority, shall provide training for homeless shelter staff to help them understand and recognize people who may have mental illness or substance abuse problems. The Maine State Housing Authority, in conjunction with the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, shall provide training for providers of mental health and substance abuse services to help them understand the problems of those who are homeless.

**Sec. 7. Appropriation.** The following funds are appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Act.

1998-99

**MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY**

## Housing Opportunities for Maine Fund

All Other	\$2,650,000
-----------	-------------

Provides funds to expand the shelter operating subsidy program from \$500,000 to \$3,150,000 annually. Fifteen percent of these funds must be designated for shelter services to homeless youth and young adults.

## FISCAL NOTE

1998-99

## APPROPRIATIONS/ALLOCATIONS

General Fund	\$2,650,000
--------------	-------------

This bill includes a General Fund appropriation of \$2,650,000 in fiscal year 1998-99 to the Maine State Housing Authority to increase the amount of funding available for the shelter operating subsidy program.

The additional costs associated with the working group and reporting requirements can be absorbed by the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services utilizing existing budgeted resources.

## SUMMARY

2

4       This bill implements the recommendations of the Interagency  
6       Task Force on Homelessness and Housing Opportunities. The bill  
8       requires homeless shelter operators, mental health providers,  
10       substance abuse services providers, and Department of Mental  
12       Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services regional  
14       housing coordinators to prepare plans to ensure that persons with  
16       mental illness or substance abuse problems or both who are in  
      homeless shelters are provided with services for mental health  
      and substance abuse problems. The Department of Mental Health,  
      Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and the Maine  
      State Housing Authority are directed to provide training for  
      mental health, substance abuse services, and homeless shelter  
      providers. The bill increases funding for the shelter operating  
      subsidy fund in the Housing Opportunities for Maine Fund.