

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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121st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2003

Legislative Document

No. 878

H.P. 655

House of Representatives, February 20, 2003

**An Act To Provide Peer Support and Advocacy Services To
Participants in the ASPIRE-TANF Program and the Parents as
Scholars Program**

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

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative LAVERRIERE-BOUCHER of Biddeford.
Cosponsored by Senator MAYO of Sagadahoc and
Representatives: KANE of Saco, MILLETT of Waterford, MILLS of Cornville, SHIELDS of
Auburn.

2
3 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

4 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3789-E** is enacted to read:

6 **§3789-E. Peer support and advocacy demonstration project**

8 **1. Project established.** The department shall contract with
9 a nonprofit entity or entities within the State to establish a
10 peer support and advocacy demonstration project, referred to in
11 this section as "the project," to provide information and
12 advocacy services for participants in the ASPIRE-TANF program, as
13 established in section 3781-A, and the Parents as Scholars
14 Program, as established in section 3790, subsection 1, in 4
15 different regions of the State.

16 **2. Project design.** The contracting entities under
17 subsection 1 are responsible for selecting, training and
18 providing supervisory and administrative support for ASPIRE-TANF
19 program or Parents as Scholars Program participants who volunteer
20 to serve as peer support advocates. The time spent by a peer
21 support advocate in activities pursuant to the project may count
22 either toward fulfilling the participation requirements for the
23 ASPIRE-TANF program under section 3788, subsections 10 and 11 or
24 toward fulfilling the program requirements for the Parents as
25 Scholars Program under section 3790, subsection 3, whichever
26 applies to the peer support advocate. The time spent by a peer
27 support advocate in activities pursuant to the program is
28 considered a field training activity for at least 26 weeks of the
29 period during which they serve as peer support advocates.

30 **3. Project criteria.** The project must meet the following
31 criteria:

34 **A.** The department must provide notice to ASPIRE-TANF
35 program and Parents as Scholars Program participants in the
36 regions selected for the project that peer support,
37 information and advocacy services are available to them and
38 ensure that the project is designed to provide, to the
39 maximum extent feasible, access to those services;

40 **B.** Peer support advocates must receive adequate training to
41 provide the services available under this project and must
42 maintain the confidentiality of ASPIRE-TANF program and
43 Parents as Scholars Program participants with whom they are
44 working;

45 **C.** Peer support advocates are authorized to work directly
46 with ASPIRE-TANF program and Parents as Scholars Program
47 workers and supervisors to help resolve problems identified
48 by participants from whom they have received a request for
49 assistance;
50

2 D. Peer support advocates from each demonstration region
4 are responsible for identifying and documenting systemic
6 problems facing ASPIRE-TANF program and Parents as Scholars
8 Program participants in their region and reporting those
problems to the Maine Temporary Assistance for Needy
Families Advisory Council established by Title 5, section
12004-I, subsection 36-C; and

10 E. The department or any employee of the department may not
12 penalize, retaliate against or discriminate against any
14 ASPIRE-TANF program or Parents as Scholars Program
16 participant for seeking assistance from a peer support
18 advocate or against any peer support advocate acting within
20 the scope of the advocate's role. If a peer support
advocate or ASPIRE-TANF program or Parents as Scholars
Program participant believes this paragraph has been
violated, the individual or the individual's representative
may request a fair hearing pursuant to Title 5, chapter 375,
subchapter 4.

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SUMMARY

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26 This bill directs the Department of Human Services to
28 contract with a nonprofit entity or entities to establish a peer
30 support advocacy demonstration project in 4 different regions of
the State to provide information and advocacy services to
ASPIRE-TANF program and Parents as Scholars Program participants.