

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

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Legislative Document

No. 970

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H.P. 683

House of Representatives, March 9, 2017

### **An Act To End Homelessness by Expanding Housing Support Services**

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Reference to the Committee on Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative JORGENSEN of Portland.  
Cosponsored by Senator DION of Cumberland and  
Representatives: FECTION of Biddeford, TALBOT ROSS of Portland, TEPLER of Topsham,  
VACHON of Scarborough, Senators: BELLOWS of Kennebec, VOLK of Cumberland.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 30-A MRSA c. 201, sub-c. 3-C** is enacted to read:

3 **SUBCHAPTER 3-C**

4 **HOUSING FIRST ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

5 **§4766. Housing First Assistance Program**

6 **1. Establishment; purpose.** The Housing First Assistance Program, referred to in  
7 this subchapter as "the program," is established under the jurisdiction of the Maine State  
8 Housing Authority, referred to in this subchapter as "the authority," to provide permanent  
9 housing to people experiencing homelessness in those areas of the State where the need is  
10 greatest and to homeless individuals addicted to opiates.

11 **2. Requirements.** The authority shall coordinate with emergency shelters, street  
12 outreach providers and other crisis responders in those areas the authority determines  
13 have the largest population of chronically homeless individuals and families in order to  
14 provide those persons with permanent housing through the program. The program must  
15 meet the core elements for a Housing First program as delineated by the United States  
16 Interagency Council on Homelessness, or a successor organization, including, but not  
17 limited to, the following.

18 A. The program may not exclude applicants from participation in the program based  
19 solely on:

20 (1) Low income or a lack of income or income source;

21 (2) A poor credit or financial history;

22 (3) A poor rental history or lack of a rental history;

23 (4) Abuse of drugs or alcohol or a failure to participate in or complete a  
24 substance abuse program or similar behavior modification program;

25 (5) A criminal record; or

26 (6) Other behavior that indicates a lack of readiness for housing.

27 B. The program must provide support services for drug and alcohol addiction as a  
28 resource to participants. Participation in the services must be voluntary and not a  
29 condition of acceptance into the program or continued residency.

30 C. Conditions and terms for payment of rent must be reasonably flexible and allow  
31 for the use of individualized payment arrangements and financial assistance.

32 D. Eviction from the program, if such eviction would result in a participant's  
33 homelessness, must be avoided when possible.

34 **3. Administration; operation by outside entity; grants; costs.** The authority shall  
35 administer the program. The authority may contract with entities not in State  
36 Government to provide housing under the program and award grants to such entities

1 under a competitive bid process. The authority may use a portion of the funding provided  
2 for the program for the administrative costs of the authority.

3 **Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and  
4 allocations are made.

5 **HOUSING AUTHORITY, MAINE STATE**

6 **Housing First Assistance Program N232**

7 Initiative: Provides ongoing funding to establish and provide 24-hour housing support  
8 services for 30 units at a "Housing First" development for chronically homeless  
9 individuals and families. Funds may be awarded to entities not in State Government  
10 through a competitive bid process.

11

12	<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
13	All Other	\$675,000	\$675,000
14			
15	<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<u>\$675,000</u>	<u>\$675,000</u>

16 **SUMMARY**

17 This bill establishes the Housing First Assistance Program. The program is  
18 established in and administered by the Maine State Housing Authority. The authority is  
19 required to work with emergency shelters and other crisis responders in the neediest areas  
20 of the State to provide permanent housing and support services for chronically homeless  
21 individuals and families and to homeless individuals addicted to opiates. The program  
22 must meet the core elements for a "Housing First" program as delineated by the United  
23 States Interagency Council on Homelessness, including not disqualifying or evicting a  
24 resident due to alcohol or substance abuse, a criminal record, poor financial history or  
25 lack of an income. The authority may contract with outside entities to operate the  
26 housing units and award grants to those entities under a competitive bid process.

27 This bill provides ongoing funding necessary to fund 30 housing units and provide  
28 support services at those units for chronically homeless individuals including opiate-  
29 addicted homeless individuals.