

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

Legislative Document

No. 1538

H.P. 1059

House of Representatives, April 27, 2017

**An Act To Provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance to Veterans
and Rental Assistance to Long-term Homeless Persons**

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative HAMANN of South Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator CHIPMAN of Cumberland and
Representatives: BERRY of Bowdoinham, COLLINGS of Portland, DeCHANT of Bath,
DEVIN of Newcastle, GOLDEN of Lewiston, MADIGAN of Waterville.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3104, sub-§15** is enacted to read:

3 **15. Assistance to veterans.** For the purposes of determining eligibility pursuant to
4 this chapter, a person who is otherwise eligible under the federal Food Stamp Act of
5 1977, 7 United States Code, Sections 2011 to 2036 and the federal Food and Nutrition
6 Act of 2008 and is also a veteran is not subject to any time limit that may otherwise apply
7 to that individual under these Acts. For the purposes of this subsection, "veteran" means
8 any person who served in the United States Armed Forces.

9 **Sec. 2. 34-B MRSA §3011**, as enacted by PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. WW, §1, is
10 amended to read:

11 **§3011. Bridging Rental Assistance Program**

12 The Bridging Rental Assistance Program is established within the department as a
13 transitional housing voucher program. The purpose of the program is to assist persons
14 with mental illness with housing assistance for up to 24 months or until they receive
15 assistance from a housing voucher program administered by the United States
16 Department of Housing and Urban Development under the United States Housing Act of
17 1937, Public Law 412, Section 8 or receive an alternative housing placement. No less
18 than 5% of funding in the program must be used each year to assist persons who have
19 been homeless as defined by the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42
20 United States Code, Section 11302 for long periods of time. The department shall adopt
21 rules to carry out the purpose of the program. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are
22 routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

23 **Sec. 3. Department of Health and Human Services to streamline access to**
24 **the Bridging Rental Assistance Program.** The Department of Health and Human
25 Services shall develop a program to use 5% of the Bridging Rental Assistance Program
26 funds under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 34-B, section 3011 for providing housing
27 assistance to persons who are homeless and have been continuously homeless for a long
28 period of time. The department shall develop a method of identifying those who have
29 been homeless for the longest period of time and targeting those persons to receive
30 housing assistance with minimal barriers to access.

31 **Sec. 4. Bridging Rental Assistance Program case management.** The
32 Department of Health and Human Services shall establish 5 new case management
33 positions to provide services to individuals receiving housing assistance pursuant to
34 section 3 of this Act who are also receiving community mental health services under the
35 department's rule Chapter 101: MaineCare Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 17 to
36 ensure that those individuals remain housed.

37 **Sec. 5. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
38 allocations are made.

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

1 **Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services 0679**

2 Initiative: Provides funding for 5 new case management positions to provide services to
3 individuals receiving housing assistance pursuant to this Act who are also receiving
4 community mental health services under the department's rule Chapter 101: MaineCare
5 Benefits Manual, Chapter II, Section 17 to ensure that those individuals remain housed.

6

7	GENERAL FUND	2017-18	2018-19
8	All Other	\$300,000	\$300,000
9			
10	GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$300,000</u>	<u>\$300,000</u>

11 **SUMMARY**

12 This bill exempts veterans who are otherwise eligible for assistance under the federal
13 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program from time limits that would otherwise apply
14 to the veterans. It also requires 5% of the Bridging Rental Assistance Program funding to
15 be used to assist individuals who have been homeless for long periods of time. The
16 Department of Health and Human Services is directed to establish 5 case management
17 positions to provide services to individuals receiving housing assistance and community
18 mental health services under MaineCare.