

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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129th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2019

Legislative Document

No. 1201

H.P. 865

House of Representatives, March 12, 2019

**An Act To Create a Low-barrier, Permanent Housing Rental
Subsidy for Individuals in the State Experiencing Long-term
Homelessness**

Reference to the Committee on Labor and Housing suggested and ordered printed.

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

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative FARNSWORTH of Portland.
Cosponsored by Representatives: BRENNAN of Portland, COOPER of Yarmouth, CRAVEN
of Lewiston, CROCKETT of Portland, HANDY of Lewiston, MADIGAN of Waterville,
PERRY of Calais, RECKITT of South Portland.

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 **RENTAL SUBSIDY PROGRAM FOR PERSONS EXPERIENCING**
5 **LONG-TERM HOMELESSNESS**

6 **§4763. Rental subsidy program for persons experiencing long-term homelessness**

7 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
8 following terms have the following meanings.

9 A. "Fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence" has the same meaning as in
10 Title 22, section 4099-D, subsection 2.

11 B. "Person experiencing chronic homelessness" means a person with a disability who
12 has been either:

13 (1) Continually homeless for at least 12 months; or

14 (2) Homeless on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years with a total
15 period of homelessness equal to at least 12 months.

16 C. "Person experiencing literal homelessness" means a person who lacks a fixed,
17 regular and adequate nighttime residence.

18 D. "Person experiencing long-term homelessness" means a person who is
19 experiencing chronic homelessness, a person experiencing literal homelessness or a
20 person who is a long-term stayer.

21 E. "Person who is a long-term stayer" means a person who, over the course of one
22 year, stays over 180 days in shelters or outdoors.

23 **2. Rental subsidy program established.** A rental subsidy program, referred to in
24 this section as "the program," is established within the Maine State Housing Authority.
25 The purpose of the program is to assist persons experiencing long-term homelessness
26 with housing assistance and rental subsidies.

27 **3. Eligibility.** The Maine State Housing Authority shall determine the eligibility of
28 and provide assistance under the program to a person experiencing long-term
29 homelessness in the following order of priority:

30 A. To a person who is a long-term stayer;

31 B. To a person experiencing chronic homelessness; and

32 C. To a person experiencing literal homelessness.

33 **4. Rental subsidy.** A rental subsidy must be provided to a person eligible for the
34 program pursuant to subsection 3. The Maine State Housing Authority shall adopt rules
35 establishing the amount of the rental subsidy available to a person eligible for the

1 program and the length of time the rental subsidy is available to a person eligible for the
2 program.

3 **5. Services.** Services provided to a person eligible for the program pursuant to
4 subsection 3 must be administered by regional committees organized by the Maine State
5 Housing Authority. The regional committees shall provide a person eligible for the
6 program assistance with navigation of available services, housing placement and housing
7 retention support services.

8 **6. Fund.** The rental subsidy program fund, referred to as "the fund," is established
9 as a nonlapsing fund within the Maine State Housing Authority pursuant to the following
10 conditions.

11 A. All money appropriated for inclusion in the fund and private donations for the
12 program may be included in the fund.

13 B. The Maine State Housing Authority may apply money in the fund for purposes
14 authorized by this subchapter.

15 **7. Report.** Beginning January 15, 2020, and annually thereafter, the Maine State
16 Housing Authority shall submit a report to the joint standing committees of the
17 Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters and health and human services
18 matters that includes performance measures of the program, including, but not limited to,
19 housing stability and retention for persons eligible for the program pursuant to subsection
20 3.

21 **8. Rules.** The Maine State Housing Authority shall adopt rules to implement this
22 section. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined
23 in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

24 **SUMMARY**

25 This bill establishes a rental subsidy program within the Maine State Housing
26 Authority for persons experiencing long-term homelessness. The rental subsidy program
27 provides a rental subsidy and housing retention services to a person eligible for the
28 program.