

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2026

Legislative Document

No. 2122

H.P. 1437

House of Representatives, January 7, 2026

**An Act to Prevent Negative Impacts from Federal Funding Changes
to and Fund Eligibility Determinations and Outreach for the
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program**

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

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

R. B. Hunt
ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Speaker FECTEAU of Biddeford.
Cosponsored by Senator HICKMAN of Kennebec and
Representatives: ABDI of Lewiston, DEBRITO of Waterville, FROST of Belgrade,
MASTRACCIO of Sanford, MCCABE of Lewiston, PLUECKER of Warren.

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the United States Department of Agriculture has changed the funding structure of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which will require the State to contribute as much as 15% of program costs if the error rate for eligibility determinations exceeds certain thresholds; and

Whereas, the effective date of the funding structure change begins in federal fiscal year 2028, which commences on October 1, 2027. The electronic system required by this legislation is expected to assist the Department of Health and Human Services in reducing the error rate to a level that minimizes the State's share of the costs of program benefits by the effective date of the federal funding structure change; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3104, sub-§5, as enacted by PL 1979, c. 386, is amended by enacting at the end a new last blocked paragraph to read:

The department shall establish a grant program to provide grants to community-based organizations that have entered into contracts with the department to provide SNAP outreach activities. The department may award a community-based organization a grant under the grant program to provide matching funds for federal funding for approved SNAP outreach activities and to hire a SNAP outreach community coordinator to improve communications with SNAP recipients.

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3104, sub-§18 is enacted to read:

18. Error rate reduction system. The department shall operate an electronic system to detect and correct erroneous eligibility determinations for food allotments using advanced mathematical methods, with a goal of reducing the error rate calculated by the United States Department of Agriculture to a level that minimizes the State's share of the costs of SNAP benefits. The electronic system must be capable of identifying root causes of erroneous eligibility determinations and operate independently of another system or systems used by the department to process and record eligibility determinations. The electronic system must operate in conformity with regulations and error rate standards promulgated by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §3104, sub-§19 is enacted to read:

19. Contingency fund. The department shall establish and maintain a contingency fund, referred to in this subsection as "the fund," as a nonlapsing fund to provide SNAP benefits to recipients of SNAP benefits in the event the Federal Government fails to provide funding for SNAP benefits to the State. The department, in its sole discretion, shall use money from the fund for the purposes of this subsection in accordance with rules adopted by the department. All money appropriated by the State for the purposes of the fund must be deposited into the fund. The balance in the fund may not exceed \$87,000,000. Rules

1 adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter
2 375, subchapter 2-A.

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

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

6 **Office for Family Independence Z020**

7 Initiative: Provides ongoing funding for the cost of contracting for a position to support and
8 manage the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program outreach activities, including the
9 SNAP Outreach Grant Program, and assist with work to reduce the State's Supplemental
10 Nutrition Assistance Program payment error rate.

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$96,400	\$96,400
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$96,400	\$96,400

15 **SNAP Contingency Fund N563**

16 Initiative: Provides one-time funding to make benefit payments to Supplemental Nutrition
17 Assistance Program recipients in the event of a loss of federal funding.

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$87,000,000	\$0
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$87,000,000	\$0

22 **SNAP Outreach Grant Program N564**

23 Initiative: Provides funding for grants to community-based organizations for Supplemental
24 Nutrition Assistance Program benefits outreach services and to hire outreach coordinators.

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$750,000	\$750,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$750,000	\$750,000

30 **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES,
31 DEPARTMENT OF**

32 **DEPARTMENT TOTALS**

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
	\$87,846,400	\$846,400
DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	\$87,846,400	\$846,400

37 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation
38 takes effect when approved.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services to operate an electronic system to reduce the error rate for eligibility determinations for food allotments under the statewide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

The bill authorizes the department to award grants to community-based organizations to provide matching funds for federal funding for approved SNAP outreach activities and to hire SNAP outreach community coordinators. The grant program is established by the department. The bill provides ongoing funding of \$750,000 per fiscal year for the grant program.

The bill directs the department to establish and maintain a contingency fund to provide SNAP benefits to SNAP benefit recipients in the event the Federal Government fails to provide SNAP benefit funding to the State. The balance in the fund may not exceed \$87,000,000. The bill appropriates \$87,000,000 in fiscal year 2025-26 to the fund.

The bill provides ongoing funding of \$96,400 per fiscal year for the cost of contracting for a position to support and manage SNAP outreach activities and assist with work to reduce the SNAP payment error rate.