

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SEVENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

SENATE

NO. 157

In Senate, Feb. 19, 1915.

Ordered, That five hundred copies be printed and that the same be referred to the Committee on Legal Affairs.

Committee on Reference.

Presented by Mr. Cole of York.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND NINE
HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN

AN ACT to provide aid for Mothers with Dependent Children.

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

Section 1. In every city and town the overseers of the
2 poor shall, subject to the provision hereinafter contained,
3 render suitable and adequate aid to any mother residing in
4 their city or town with a dependent child or children under
5 the age of fifteen years, who is in need of, and desires, such
6 aid to enable her to maintain herself and children in her
7 home and who is a fit person to bring up her children.

Sect. 2. The amount of the aid which shall be rendered
2 by the overseers to such mother shall not exceed the value
3 of five dollars a week, to a mother having but one child, un-

4 der the age of 15, and further payment to the value of two
5 dollars a week for each additional child, provided that the
6 total amount of aid furnished to any one family shall not
7 exceed twelve dollars.

Sect. 3. Any such mother needing and desiring such aid
2 may apply therefor personally or by letter to the State Board
3 of Charities and Corrections, hereinafter called the Board.
4 The Board shall thereupon cause the applicant to fill out and
5 sign an application blank, or shall fill out the same from
6 information furnished by the applicant and cause it to be
7 signed by the latter, in which shall be stated, first, the name
8 of applicant and that of her husband, the time and place of
9 her marriage, and whether her husband is living or deceased ;
10 second, the names and ages of her children ; third, her pres-
11 ent residence and address, the length of time she has been a
12 resident of this state, and where she has resided therein ;
13 fourth, the nature and amount of any property possessed by
14 herself, her husband, if living, and her children, and the
15 extent and sources of her income and theirs ; fifth, the
16 names and addresses of her near relatives and those of
17 her husband, and of one or more persons to whom reference
18 may be made for information ; sixth, a statement that the
19 applicant will agree to employ all aid received by her under
20 this act solely for the support of herself and her children
21 under the age of 15 years, and their proper upbringing in
22 her home.

Sect. 4. When such application has been made to the
2 Board, it shall at once notify an agent for the protection of
3 children within the county where the applicant resides, by
4 furnishing such agent with a copy of said application blank
5 so filled out, and the overseers of the city or town where
6 the applicant is residing, and said overseers and said agent
7 shall thereupon each promptly make careful investigation by
8 personally interviewing the mother in her home, looking up
9 her references, and pursuing such other sources of informa-
10 tion as are available, for the purpose of determining, first,
11 the truth of the statements contained in her application; sec-
12 ond, whether she is a fit person to bring up her children, and
13 whether the inmates and surroundings of her household
14 are such as to render it suitable for her children to reside
15 at home; third, whether under all the circumstances, con-
16 sidering her own resources and the ability of any member
17 of her family to contribute to her support, and the possibil-
18 ity of compelling contributions to be made for that purpose
19 by any person under obligation so to do,—such mother is in
20 need of aid under the provisions of this act and, if so, in
21 what amount.

Sect. 5. Said overseers and agent shall thereupon embody
2 the results of their investigation in a brief report, to the
3 Board and if they agree that the applicant is entitled to re-
4 ceive such aid, and as to the amount of the same, the Board
5 shall then notify the city or town to pay to said applicant
6 weekly the amount determined upon. If, however, said

7 overseers and agents fail to agree as to whether the appli-
8 cant is entitled to aid, or as to the amount of the same, each
9 shall thereupon file with the Board, a copy of their said re-
10 port concerning the results of their investigation and their
11 recommendations thereon, and the said Board shall there-
12 upon determine all matters in question, and communicate in
13 writing its decision to said overseers and agents, and if the
14 applicant is held by the Board to be entitled to aid, it shall
15 fix the amount thereof, and the city or town shall thereupon
16 pay the same in money or its value to the applicant pursuant
17 to said decision.

Sect. 6. Said overseers and agents shall keep a record of
2 all applicants investigated, and shall visit or cause a visit to
3 be made by some agent in their behalf at the home of each
4 mother being thus aided, and see that her children are actual-
5 ly living with the mother in her home, and observe the con-
6 ditions of the home and family, and make and keep a record
7 of such visit and any facts observed which bear upon the
8 necessity or advisability of the continuance of aid which is
9 being rendered, and report the same to the Board regularly.
10 If, at any time, either the overseers or said agent shall be
11 of the opinion that such aid ought to be discontinued such
12 opinion shall be communicated by the overseers to said agent,
13 or by the latter to the overseers, as the case may be, and,
14 if the overseers and agent agree in the matter, they shall
15 report their recommendations to the Board, and the latter
16 shall decide.

Sect. 7. The provisions and benefits of this act shall apply
2 to all mothers and their dependent children, whether or not
3 they or any of them may have a settlement in this state who
4 shall have resided in the state not less than two years. No
5 mother, or any of her children shall acquire a settlement or
6 be in process of acquiring settlement while receiving aid,
7 nor be deemed a pauper by receiving such aid.

Sect. 8. In any case, when application for aid hereunder
2 is made by a mother who has a husband living, who is able
3 by means of his property or labor to contribute to her sup-
4 port and that of her children, but who wilfully neglects or
5 refuses so to do, or who has deserted her and her children, it
6 shall be the duty of the overseers or agent to whom such
7 application is made to make complaint to the proper authori-
8 ties within their county, and endeavor to compel such hus-
9 band to contribute to the support of his said wife and chil-
10 dren, under the provisions of chapter forty-two of the pub-
11 lic laws of 1907, but this shall not prevent immediate tem-
12 porary relief being given under the provisions of this act
13 when necessary while such proceedings against said hus-
14 band are being had.

Sect. 9. The Board shall have general supervision over
2 the administration of the provisions of this act, and shall
3 prescribe appropriate forms for applications, reports and
4 other proceedings required by the act; said Board shall keep
5 a record of all cases reported to it hereunder, and action
6 taken by it in relation to the same; and shall keep on file

7 all reports made to it by overseers or agents; it shall see
8 that families aided hereunder are visited as herein required,
9 and shall have access to any records of the overseers of the
10 poor or said agents relating to any proceedings hereunder.
11 In order to aid said Board in determining any questions
12 presented to it for decisions by the overseers or agents, un-
13 der the provisions of this act, it may in addition to their re-
14 ports, make further investigation in such manner as it may
15 deem best, and shall have embodied a statement concerning
16 the work done hereunder in its annual report.

All expenses of investigation by said agents or said Board
18 under this act shall be paid out of the appropriation made
19 by the state for the purposes of this act. For their services
20 rendered under this act, said agents shall receive their actual
21 expenses, and the sum of \$2.50 per diem for every day,
22 and at the same ratio for every part of the day in which
23 they are engaged in making such investigations or visits, or
24 performing their duties under the act. Their bills for ser-
25 vices shall be rendered quarterly to the Board, and when
26 passed upon and approved by the latter and the state auditor,
27 shall be paid by the state treasurer.

Sect. 10. Any city or town rendering aid, under the pro-
2 visions of this act, shall be reimbursed by the state for one-
3 half of the amount given after approval by the Board and
4 state auditor of the bills of said city or town for aid so ren-
5 dered. If the mother so aided has no settlement, the city
6 or town shall be reimbursed for the total amount of the aid

7 given after approval of the bill by the Board and state audi-
8 tor, as aforesaid. If the mother so aided has a lawful settle-
9 ment in another city or town, the amount of such aid ren-
10 dered may be recovered by the city or town giving it in an
11 action against the city or town liable therefor, provided the
12 city or town so liable was notified in accordance with chap-
13 ter 27, section 37 of the revised statutes of 1903, or against
14 the kindred of the mother and children so aided in the man-
15 ner provided by said chapter 27, section 37.

Sect. 11. For the purpose of reimbursing the cities or
2 towns as provided in the foregoing section and paying for
3 the services of the agents for the protection of children, and
4 the expenses of said agents and the Board in connection
5 with the work required to be done by them under this act,
6 there shall be appropriated from the state treasury the sum
7 of \$15,000 annually for the first two years during which this
8 act is in operation, and if any amount in excess of \$15,000
9 is necessary it shall be paid from funds not otherwise ap-
10 propriated.

Sect. 12. All acts and parts of acts inconsistent herein are
2 hereby repealed.