

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SEVENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

SENATE

NO. 346

In Senate, March 13, 1915.

Reported by Senator Walker from Committee on Legal Affairs and ordered printed under joint rules.

W. E. LAWRY, Secretary.

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 by
2 the Overseers to such mother shall not exceed the value of
3 five dollars a week, to a mother having but one child,

4 under 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
3 Board of Charities and Corrections, hereinafter called the
4 Board. The Board shall thereupon cause the applicant to
5 fill out and sign an application blank, or shall fill out the
6 same from information furnished by the applicant and cause
7 it to be signed by the latter, in which shall be stated, first,
8 the name of applicant, and that of her husband, the time and
9 place of her marriage and whether her husband is living or
10 deceased; second, the names and ages of her children; third,
11 her present residence and address, the length of time she
12 has been a resident of this state, and where she has resided
13 therein; fourth, the nature and amount of any property pos-
14 sessed by herself, her husband, if living, and her children,
15 and the extent and sources of her income and theirs; fifth,
16 the 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 Overseer 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:
12 second, whether she is a fit person to bring up her children,
13 and whether the inmates and surroundings of her household
14 are such as to render it suitable for her children to reside at
15 home; third, whether, under all the circumstances, consid-
16 ering her own resources and the ability of any member of
17 her family to contribute to her support and the possibility
18 of compelling contributions to be made for that purpose by
19 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 em-
2 body the results of their investigation in a brief report, to
3 the Board and if they agree that the applicant is entitled to
4 receive such aid, and as to the amount of the same, the
5 Board shall then notify the city or town to pay to said appli-
6 cant 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
14 the applicant is held by the Board to be entitled to aid, it
15 shall fix the amount thereof, and the city or town shall
16 thereupon pay the same in money or its value to the appli-
17 cant pursuant 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 actu-
5 ally living with the mother in her home, and observe the
6 conditions of the home and family, and make and keep a
7 record of such visit and any facts observed which bear upon
8 the necessity or advisability of the continuance of aid which
9 is being rendered, and report the same to the Board regu-
10 larly. If, at any time, either the Overseers or said Agent
11 shall be of the opinion that such aid ought to be discontin-
12 ued such opinion shall be communicated by the Overseers to
13 said Agent, or by the latter to the Overseers, as the case
14 may be, and, if the Overseers and Agent agree in the matter,
15 they shall report their recommendations to the Board, and
16 the latter 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,
6 it 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 husband
14 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 tak-
6 en by it in relation to the same; and shall keep on file all re-

7 ports made to it by Overseers or Agents; it shall see that
8 families aided hereunder are visited as herein required, and
9 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 pre-
12 sented to it for decisions by the Overseers or Agents, under
13 the provisions of this act, it may in addition to their reports,
14 make further investigation in such manner as it may deem
15 best, and shall have embodied a statement concerning the
16 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 by
19 the State for the purposes of this act. For their services
20 rendered under this act, said agents shall receive their ac-
21 tual 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 serv-
25 ices shall be rendered quarterly to the Board, and when
26 passed upon and approved by the latter and the State
27 Auditor, 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
5 rendered. 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 Au-
8 ditor, as aforesaid.} If the mother so aided has a lawful
9 settlement in another city or town, the amount of such aid
10 rendered may be recovered by the city or town giving it in
11 an action against the city or town liable therefor, provided
12 the city or town so liable was notified in accordance with
13 Chapter 27, Section 37 of the Revised Statutes of 1903, or
14 against the kindred of the mother and children so aided in
15 the manner 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.