

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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MaineHousing

Maine State Housing Authority

Strategic Plan

2013-2016

Think



OVERVIEW

The Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing) is an independent authority created by the Maine State Legislature in 1969 to address problems of unsafe, unsuitable, overcrowded, and unaffordable housing. At its core, the agency couples the efficiencies of the private financial markets with public purpose goals to provide affordable home ownership and rental housing opportunities for Maine people.

Since inception, the agency has been asked to handle additional responsibilities on behalf of the state. As a result, MaineHousing administers a number of federal housing-related programs, including the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, the Section 8 Rental Assistance programs, the Emergency Solutions Grant Program, the Weatherization Program, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, and others. Such programs reduce the costs associated with housing for Maine people.

Today, MaineHousing is a \$1.7 billion financial institution that brings together the functions of a housing finance agency and public housing authority to administer a range of programs and services that reach every region of the state. These programs are administered with and through a broad range of public and private partners equally committed to providing Maine people with affordable housing and services suitable to their housing needs.

There are considerable challenges facing housing providers in Maine and throughout the nation. The future of federal and state funding is uncertain. Nationally, there are ongoing unresolved debates about what the basic structures to finance both rental and ownership housing should be. In Maine, the needs for housing are changing as a result of demographic shifts and economic conditions. Planning in this environment is difficult. This plan is developed with the recognition that the fundamental approaches may change.

The agency's Strategic Plan 2013-2016 was developed over seven months (April-October 2013) with broad input from the agency's partners, employees, and Board members. The Plan balances the desire to achieve major and far reaching goals with the reality of limited and diminishing resources. The Plan rests on four mission goals and a supporting set of operational priorities. MaineHousing thanks the many people who gave their time and expertise in shaping the foundation of the Plan.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS

MISSION

The mission of MaineHousing is to assist Maine people in obtaining and maintaining quality affordable housing and services suitable to their housing needs.

VISION OF SUCCESS

All Maine people have the opportunity to live in quality affordable housing.

OPERATIONAL VISION

MaineHousing is the leading provider of affordable housing resources in Maine, helping Maine people to obtain and maintain quality affordable housing. The agency is known for the excellence of its programs and services, responsiveness to clients and partners, efficient and cost-effective delivery of programs and services, and fiscal responsibility. MaineHousing's employees are known for their competency, passion, and innovative approaches to problem solving.

MaineHousing delivers on its mission in collaboration with a wide array of public and private partners. The agency is responsive, open, and transparent in its relationships. The agency is a leader in identifying important housing issues and working with its stakeholders to develop effective solutions.

CORE VALUES

In carrying out our work we pride ourselves on being:

Passionate and Committed

We care passionately about the mission of MaineHousing and the impact of our work on people's lives.

Thoughtful and Caring

We care about one another and the people we serve. We are willing to do more than is required or expected in order to provide help where it is needed.

Professional

We pride ourselves on being competent and knowledgeable.

Accountable

In the administration of our resources, we are answerable to funders and creditors. We take our stewardship of resources very seriously, adhering to rules and regulations. We believe we owe nothing less to our Board, our funders and creditors, our partners and clients, and the communities across Maine where our resources are being applied for positive impact.

We believe that a focus on continuous improvement makes us stronger and better able to deliver on our mission. How we do our work matters. We are committed to upholding our core values while striving toward an agency-wide culture that is evermore:

Responsive

We view both our partners and clients as customers and pride ourselves on providing excellent customer service. We work collaboratively and deliver clear, timely responses. We respect that our actions impact our customers; we consider the overall goal and offer thoughtful, workable solutions to issues.

Innovative

We are open to adaptive approaches and innovative solutions that ultimately lead to better outcomes for our customers.

PROGRAM GOALS

Goal 1: Improve Housing Quality

MaineHousing will improve the quality of housing in Maine and extend its useful life by reinvesting in our existing housing portfolio and by seeking investment opportunities in other multifamily and single family properties throughout the state. We will seek to assure the long term viability of projects by increasing reserves and promoting operational efficiencies. We will incent landlords to improve properties and to provide long term quality housing.

Goal 2: Expand the Supply of Affordable Housing

The existing inventory of affordable housing does not meet the existing need. MaineHousing will use the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program to expand and improve the supply of affordable housing. MaineHousing will continue its efforts to reduce the per unit cost of new development. MaineHousing will also explore new financing mechanisms to expand the supply of affordable multifamily and single family housing. MaineHousing will seek to stretch rental subsidies.

Goal 3: Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability

Many Maine people are assisted by MaineHousing and our partners in meeting their housing needs. Housing stability, the ability of Maine people to obtain and maintain affordable housing, is essential to our ongoing efforts to provide quality affordable housing. MaineHousing will implement strategies to reduce the foreclosure rate of homeowners, to lower heating costs for homeowners through energy assistance and weatherization, and to provide support for low income renters who are barely able to pay for their housing, and to help individuals and families who are homeless to obtain housing.

Goal 4: Provide Leadership in the Housing Field

MaineHousing will identify priority housing needs within Maine and will focus its resources on addressing these needs. MaineHousing will promote strong communities and support economic development. MaineHousing will engage in ongoing housing needs assessments to inform community and housing providers' planning processes. MaineHousing will convene stakeholders to explore and share innovative housing solutions that address regional needs and priorities.

OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES

Our Operational Vision describes the organization we are committed to being. To move us ever closer to that vision we have committed ourselves as an agency to maintaining our current strengths while further improving in four areas:

SERVICE

MaineHousing will be highly responsive to customers in addressing issues and delivering programs and services. MaineHousing will define excellent customer service for clients and partners, research and develop innovative approaches to providing service, establish standards for responsiveness, train staff, and identify tools to measure our success.

PEOPLE

MaineHousing's employees will exemplify the core values of the agency while feeling supported and recognized for their contributions. MaineHousing will implement a multi-dimensional system to provide effective internal communication, identify ways to support staff as they adopt new strategic priorities, and revise our performance management process to encourage and measure progress toward full implementation of our values.

MaineHousing will have the leadership capacity and talent to meet current as well as future strategic priorities and housing challenges facing the state of Maine. MaineHousing will analyze its recruitment, retention, and compensation practices to be sure we hire and keep the most qualified people. MaineHousing will train, cross-train, and mentor staff to prepare for future needs. MaineHousing will assess its decision-making structure to ensure the agency's focus on strategic priorities.

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

MaineHousing's financial capacity will assure the ability to respond to Maine's affordable housing needs into the future. MaineHousing will work to maintain its strong credit ratings by maintaining profitability and increasing fund balances, balancing public purpose objectives with prudent fiscal management, refining and implementing a risk management framework, and pursuing new opportunities to enhance the agency's fiduciary position and increase capacity to support affordable housing initiatives.

MaineHousing will increase operational efficiencies and improve program evaluation to better respond to Maine's affordable housing needs. To increase efficiency MaineHousing will conduct departmental audits, analyze the most cost effective use of staff, and pursue ways to lower costs through automation. To enhance program evaluation, MaineHousing will implement an expanded formal process to audit existing programs and evaluate new initiatives and funding opportunities that address goals and priorities set forth in the strategic plan.

RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION

MaineHousing will use each resource to its maximum efficiency to achieve our program goals. MaineHousing will assess and redesign its approach for allocating resources to programs to focus on the objectives of the Strategic Plan and ensure that scarce resources are used in a way that maximizes benefits to Maine people. When subsidy is used, an assessment of public purpose per subsidy dollar will be made including how the program impacts the client, the demographic profile of the client, and what their next best option would be without the program. Program design will be reviewed to see if more subsidy could go to benefitting clients by reducing program delivery costs.

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