



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 1546

H.P. 1151

House of Representatives, April 22, 2021

**An Act To Prevent Homelessness by Establishing the Rental Relief
Fund within the Maine State Housing Authority**

Received by the Clerk of the House on April 20, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Labor and Housing pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

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

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative LOOKNER of 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 RELIEF PROGRAM FOR PERSONS HAVING DIFFICULTY PAYING**
5 **RENT**

6 **§4767. Rental relief program for persons having difficulty paying rent**

7 **1. Rental subsidy program established.** A rental subsidy program, referred to in this
8 section as "the program," is established within the Maine State Housing Authority. The
9 purpose of the program is to provide rental subsidies to persons having difficulty paying
10 rent.

11 **2. Eligibility.** The Maine State Housing Authority shall determine the eligibility of
12 and provide assistance under the program to a person having difficulty paying rent in the
13 following order of priority:

14 A. To any person whose personal or financial circumstances have changed as a result
15 of the novel coronavirus disease referred to as COVID-19, including but not limited to
16 a person whose:

17 (1) Place of employment closed;

18 (2) Hours of work were reduced;

19 (3) Child's daycare or school is closed; or

20 (4) Income is otherwise decreased due to COVID-19; and

21 B. To any other person who is having difficulty paying rent.

22 **3. Rental subsidy.** A rental subsidy must be provided on behalf of a person eligible
23 for the program pursuant to subsection 2 directly to a landlord by a community action
24 agency as defined in Title 22, section 5321, subsection 2. The Maine State Housing
25 Authority shall adopt rules establishing the amount of the rental subsidy available to a
26 person eligible for the program and the length of time the rental subsidy is available to a
27 person eligible for the program.

28 **4. Fund.** The Rental Relief Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," is
29 established as a nonlapsing fund within the Maine State Housing Authority pursuant to the
30 following conditions.

31 A. All money appropriated for inclusion in the fund pursuant to Title 36, section
32 4641-B, subsection 4-B, paragraph H and private donations for the program may be
33 included in the fund.

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

36 **5. Report.** Beginning January 15, 2022, and annually thereafter, the Maine State
37 Housing Authority shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature
38 having jurisdiction over housing matters on the program, including the number of persons

1 eligible for the program pursuant to subsection 2 and the number of persons provided rental
2 subsidies under the program pursuant to subsection 3.

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

6 **Sec. 2. 36 MRSA §4641-A, sub-§3** is enacted to read:

7 **3. Surcharge.** In addition to the tax imposed under subsections 1 and 2, an additional
8 tax in the amount of \$2.20 for each \$500 or fractional part of \$500 of the value of the
9 property transferred as provided in subsection 1 or of the real property owned by the entity
10 and located in this State as provided in subsection 2.

11 **Sec. 3. 36 MRSA §4641-B, sub-§4-B, ¶H** is enacted to read:

12 H. Notwithstanding paragraph F, the Treasurer of State shall credit all revenue derived
13 from the tax imposed by section 4641-A, subsection 3 to the rental relief program for
14 persons having difficulty paying rent established in Title 30-A, chapter 201, subchapter
15 3-C.

16 SUMMARY

17 This bill establishes a rental subsidy program within the Maine State Housing
18 Authority for persons experiencing difficulty paying rent. The rental subsidy program
19 provides a rental subsidy on behalf of a person eligible for the program.