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Legislative Document

No. 1066

S.P. 450

In Senate, March 18, 2025

An Act Regarding Limits on Municipal General Assistance Programs

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on March 14, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator BERNARD of Aroostook.
Cosponsored by Representative SMITH of Palermo and
Representatives: DUCHARME of Madison, QUINT of Hodgdon.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §4308, sub-§1-A**, as enacted by PL 2011, c. 655, Pt. R, §2, is
3 amended to read:

4 **1-A. Limit on housing assistance.** Except as provided in ~~subsections~~ subsection 1-B
5 ~~and 2~~, housing assistance provided pursuant to this chapter is limited to a maximum of 9 3
6 months during the period from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013 in a 12-month period per
7 household, except for temporary housing or emergency shelter as defined by rule by the
8 department.

9 **Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §4308, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. II, §1, is
10 further amended by amending the 2nd blocked paragraph to read:

11 A municipality may not exceed maximum levels of assistance established pursuant to
12 section 4305 for an applicant household for more than 30 days in a 12-month period ~~when~~
13 ~~assistance is granted for housing in a hotel, motel, inn or other lodging place as defined in~~
14 ~~section 2491, subsection 7-F.~~

15 **Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §4316-A, sub-§1-A**, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 410, Pt. AAA,
16 §10, is amended to read:

17 **1-A. Period of ineligibility.** An applicant, whether an initial or repeat applicant, who
18 quits work or is discharged from employment due to misconduct as defined in Title 26,
19 section 1043, subsection 23, is ineligible to receive assistance for ~~420~~ 180 days after the
20 applicant's separation from employment.

21 **Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §4316-A, sub-§2**, as amended by PL 1993, c. 410, Pt. AAA, §10
22 and PL 2003, c. 689, Pt. B, §6, is further amended to read:

23 **2. Municipal work program.** A municipality ~~may~~ shall require that an otherwise
24 eligible person who is capable of working be required to perform work for the municipality
25 or work for a nonprofit organization, if that organization has agreed to participate as an
26 employer in the municipal work program, as a condition of receiving general assistance.
27 The municipality may also require recipients, as a part of the municipal work program, to
28 participate in a training, educational or rehabilitative program that would assist the recipient
29 in securing employment. The municipal work program is subject to the following
30 requirements.

31 A. A person may not, as a condition of general assistance eligibility, be required to do
32 any amount of work that exceeds the value of the net general assistance that the person
33 would otherwise receive under municipal general assistance standards. Any person
34 performing work under this subsection must be provided with net general assistance,
35 the value of which is computed at a rate of at least the State's minimum wage.

36 B. A person may not be required to work under this subsection for a nonprofit
37 organization if that work would violate a basic religious belief of that person.

38 C. An eligible person performing work under this subsection may not replace regular
39 municipal employees or regular employees of a participating nonprofit organization.

40 D. An eligible person in need of emergency assistance may not be required to perform
41 work under this subsection prior to receiving general assistance. An applicant who is
42 not in need of emergency assistance may be required to satisfactorily fulfill a workfare

1 requirement prior to receiving the nonemergency assistance conditionally granted to
2 that applicant.

3 E. Expenses related to work performed under this subsection by an eligible person
4 must be considered in determining the amount of net general assistance to be provided
5 to the person.

6 F. General assistance provided by a municipality for work performed by an eligible
7 person under this subsection must be:

- 8 (1) Included in the reimbursable net general assistance costs; and
- 9 (2) Itemized separately in reports to the Department of Health and Human Services
10 under section 4311.

11 G. A person may not be required to work under this subsection if that person is
12 physically or mentally incapable of performing the work assigned.

13 **SUMMARY**

14 This bill amends the provisions regarding municipal general assistance by:

- 15 1. Reducing housing assistance from 9 months to 3 months within a 12-month period
16 except for temporary housing or emergency shelter;
- 17 2. Expanding the circumstances in which maximum levels of assistance may not be
18 exceeded for an applicant household for more than 30 days in a 12-month period;
- 19 3. Increasing the period of ineligibility for an applicant who quits work or is discharged
20 from employment due to misconduct from 120 to 180 days; and
- 21 4. Requiring municipalities to require an otherwise eligible person who is capable of
22 working to perform work for the municipality or a participating nonprofit as a condition of
23 receiving general assistance.