

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

S.P. 373 - L.D. 840

**An Act to Modernize the State Supplement to Supplemental Security Income
by Removing Marriage Disincentives**

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

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §3271, sub-§2, as amended by PL 2023, c. 405, Pt. A, §65, is further amended to read:

2. The department, to the extent allowed by Title XVI of the United States Social Security Act, as amended, and regulations promulgated thereunder, shall establish standard levels of state supplemental income benefits for blind, disabled and elderly people. The benefits must be provided under a modified flat benefit system, and may vary by ~~marital status, and by~~ living arrangements to the extent allowed by Title XVI of the United States Social Security Act, as amended, and regulations promulgated thereunder. The benefits may not be based on individual budgeted need and may not vary by category or geographical area. Benefits for a couple, ~~except as provided under section 3273, subsection 1, paragraph B,~~ must be equal to the sum of the amount of benefit for ~~an~~ each individual ~~and 50% of the benefit for an individual in the couple.~~

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §3272, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 790, §3, is amended to read:

1. **Standard.** The standard utilized to determine need ~~shall~~ must be the current annual budget at the lower level of living for ~~a retired couple~~ an individual as most recently determined by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for Portland, Maine, or budgets ~~which that~~ are consistent with such a budget at the lower level of living, taking into account budget variances by ~~marital status and~~ living arrangements ~~permitted~~ permitted pursuant to Title XVI of the United States Social Security Act, as amended, and regulations promulgated thereunder.

Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §3273, sub-§1, ¶A, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 790, §3, is amended to read:

A. Increase the minimum monthly federal payment standard, in addition to that established pursuant to federal law, by an amount of at least \$8 per month for an individual ~~and \$12 per month for a couple~~;

Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §3273, sub-§1, ¶C, as enacted by PL 1973, c. 790, §3, is amended to read:

C. For a beneficiary who resides in a living arrangement ~~which~~ that meets a living arrangement classification established by the department, but who does not reside in an adult foster home or boarding home, in addition to the minimum federal payment level as adjusted pursuant to paragraph A, provide, based on such living arrangement classification, an amount not to exceed \$42 per month for an individual ~~and \$63 per month for a couple.~~

Sec. 5. 22 MRSA §3273, sub-§6, ¶B-1, as enacted by PL 1991, c. 528, Pt. E, §25 and affected by Pt. RRR and enacted by c. 591, Pt. E, §25, is amended to read:

B-1. On July 1st of every year, the sum of the monthly amount of any state supplemental income benefit authorized by subsection 1, paragraphs A and C, plus the amount of the minimum monthly federal supplemental security income in effect at that time must be increased by a percentage amount equal to the percentage rise in the United States Consumer Price Index for April 1st of that year over the level of the Index for April 1st of the previous year plus any additional percentage amount as is recommended annually by the department. Such an increase may be made only insofar as appropriations are available. In determining the additional percentage amount, consideration must be given to the goal of reaching, within a reasonable time, a benefit level equal to or consistent with the current budget at the lower level of living for a ~~retired couple~~ an individual established by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for Portland, Maine.

If, on April 1st of any year, the sum of the monthly amount of any state supplemental payment authorized by subsection 1, paragraphs A and C, plus the amount of the minimum monthly federal supplemental security income in effect at that time, is equal to or exceeds the amount resulting from 12 divided into the current annual budget at the lower level of living for a ~~retired couple~~ an individual as most recently established by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, for Portland, Maine, or taking into account variances by ~~marital status and~~ living arrangements as established by the department, a budget that is not inconsistent with that annual budget divided by 12, the increase provided on July 1st next following is limited to the percentage rise in the Consumer Price Index.

~~This paragraph takes effect July 1, 1993.~~

Sec. 6. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF

State Supplement to Federal Supplemental Security Income 0131

Initiative: Provides funding to make the state supplemental income benefit payment for a couple, both of whom qualify for the benefit, equal to the sum of the amount of the benefit for each individual in the couple.

GENERAL FUND	2025-26	2026-27
All Other	\$0	\$36,828

GENERAL FUND TOTAL

\$0

\$36,828