

STATE OF MAINE

—  
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD  
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX

—  
S.P. 772 - L.D. 1965

**Resolve, to Establish a Task Force to Create a Court Navigation Program  
Plan**

**Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

**Whereas,** this legislation needs to take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period due to the rise in the number of litigants who are not represented by an attorney and in order to provide the task force established by this resolve sufficient time to complete its work; and

**Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

**Sec. 1. University of Maine System to convene task force. Resolved:** That the University of Maine System shall convene a task force, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," to create a court navigation program plan. The membership of the task force must consist of at least one representative from each of the following:

1. The schools of social work of the University of Maine System;
2. The University of Maine School of Law;
3. Maine Pretrial Services, Inc.;
4. Pine Tree Legal Assistance;
5. Disability Rights Maine;
6. The National Alliance on Mental Illness Maine;
7. 211 Maine;
8. The Department of Health and Human Services; and
9. The judicial branch.

**Sec. 2. Court navigation program plan. Resolved:** That the task force shall examine court navigation programs nationwide, recommend a model for a court navigation program for use in the State and create a plan for implementing the program. At a minimum, the court navigation program model recommended by the task force must be designed to:

1. Provide guidance and information about court processes and procedures to persons involved with the court system;
2. Provide persons involved with the court system referrals to community-based resources related to their behavioral health needs, such as mental health treatment and substance use disorder treatment, and their economic and social service-related needs, such as housing, employment, transportation and food, in order to address those needs; and
3. Be operated, in significant part, by social work students and law students who have the opportunity to earn academic credit for their participation in the operation of the court navigation program.

In pursuing its duties under this section, the task force shall consult with advocates for persons who are unhoused, for survivors of domestic violence, for survivors of sexual assault and for other identifiable populations who may particularly benefit from the assistance of the court navigation program.

**Sec. 3. Report. Resolved:** That, no later than January 15, 2027, the task force shall submit a report that includes the court navigation program plan required by section 2, including a model for a court navigation program for use in this State, and that includes suggested legislation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over judiciary matters. The joint standing committee may report out legislation based on the subject matter of the report to the 133rd Legislature in 2027.

**Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.