

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'An Act Regarding Presumptive Eligibility and Homelessness under the General Assistance Laws'

Amend the bill in section 1 in subsection 5-A in the 2nd line (page 1, line 4 in L.D.) by striking out the following: "has no permanent or safe housing including when a person or household"

Amend the bill by inserting after section 2 the following:

'**Sec. 3. 22 MRSA §4309, sub-§5** is enacted to read:

5. Presumptive eligibility. The overseer in a municipality shall presume eligibility to receive general assistance of a person who is provided shelter in an emergency shelter for the homeless located in that municipality. After 30 days, that person's eligibility must be redetermined. When presumptive eligibility is determined under this subsection, no other municipality may be determined to be the municipality of responsibility during that 30-day period.

Sec. 4. 22 MRSA §4311, sub-§1-D is enacted to read:

1-D. Reimbursement for homeless shelter costs. After a person has been homeless or living in an emergency shelter for the homeless for 90 consecutive nights, the department shall reimburse a municipality for 100% of any future direct costs of benefits or costs of providing shelter for that person. The department shall determine, by rule, how to establish and verify that a person has been continuously homeless for 90 days.

Sec. 5. Work group. The Department of Health and Human Services shall convene a work group of stakeholders to study the municipal general assistance program established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 22, chapter 1161 to determine more efficient methods of distributing general assistance benefits to individuals, review differential effects on service center municipalities and other municipalities of providing general assistance, devise equitable methods of establishing the municipality of responsibility and develop services to reduce homelessness and reliance on homeless shelters. The stakeholders must include, but are not limited to, the Maine State Housing Authority and organizations representing mayors, municipalities, general assistance providers, clients of services and other appropriate persons. The department shall report its findings, together with recommendations and any suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services no later than January 2, 2020.'

Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section number to read consecutively.

SUMMARY

This amendment, which is the majority report of the committee, changes the definition of "homelessness" in the bill to remove references to a need for permanent or safe housing. It adds a requirement for the Department of Health and Human Services to reimburse a municipality 100% of direct general assistance costs after a person has spent 90 consecutive nights homeless or in an emergency shelter for the homeless. It also establishes presumptive eligibility for general assistance for 30 days for persons who are provided shelter at emergency shelters for the homeless and specifies that no other municipality may be determined to be the municipality of responsibility during that 30-day period. It also requires the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a work group of stakeholders to examine the municipal general assistance program and report findings to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services no later than January 2, 2020.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED
(See attached)