

**132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE****LD 1691****LR 1844(01)****An Act to Expand Access to Justice in Rural Maine by Incentivizing Attorneys to Practice in Underserved Areas****Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement for Original Bill****Sponsor: Rep. Kuhn of Falmouth****Committee: Education and Cultural Affairs****Fiscal Note Required: Yes**

Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement

Unfunded Loan Program - Finance Authority of Maine

	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	Projections FY 2027-28	Projections FY 2028-29
Appropriations/Allocations				
Other Special Revenue Funds	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500

Fiscal Detail and Notes

This bill establishes the Access to Justice Loan Program to be administered by the Finance Authority of Maine to provide loans to eligible residents of the State who demonstrate an interest in or commitment to providing legal services in underserved areas of the State. No funding for the loan program is provided in the bill. The Finance Authority of Maine will require Other Special Revenue Funds base allocations of \$500 per year beginning in fiscal year 2025-26 to a newly created Access to Justice Loan Program Revolving Fund to authorize the expenditure of funds in the event monies are received from public or private sources to support the loan program.

This bill also requires the University of Maine System, to the extent that sufficient funds are available, to establish a rural practice track at the University of Maine School of Law. The University of Maine estimates the annual cost to support 6 first-year or 2nd-year eligible law school students to be approximately \$161,780 per year. The one-time cost to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing and communications plan is estimated to be \$120,000. According to the University of Maine System, no funding is available for this program at this time.