



# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

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Legislative Document

No. 1613

H.P. 1067

House of Representatives, April 15, 2025

### **An Act to Establish Maine's Care Force to Address the State's Health Care Crisis**

(EMERGENCY)

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Received by the Clerk of the House on April 11, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative MACIAS of Topsham.  
Cosponsored by Representatives: BECK of South Portland, CLOUTIER of Lewiston,  
HASenfus of Readfield, MALON of Biddeford, MILLIKEN of Blue Hill, RAY of  
Lincolnville, ROEDER of Bangor, Senator: GROHOSKI of Hancock.

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

**Whereas**, Maine is experiencing an essential support worker shortage, negatively impacting both service recipients and providers, and this shortage must be addressed as soon as possible; 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 enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. 22 MRSA c. 167** is enacted to read:

## CHAPTER 167

## MAINE'S CARE FORCE

**§791. Short title**

This chapter may be known and cited as "the Maine's Care Force Act."

## §792. Definitions

**1. Essential support worker.** "Essential support worker" has the same meaning as in section 7401, subsection 3.

**2. Participant.** "Participant" means an individual enrolled in Maine's Care Force.

**3. Placement site.** "Placement site" means a location where an essential support worker is deployed, including a home, health care facility, community center or fire department.

### **§793. Maine's Care Force**

**1. Establishment.** Maine's Care Force is established within the department.

**2. Maine's Care Force Fund.** The Maine's Care Force Fund is established as a nonlapsing fund within and administered by the department to support Maine's Care Force. The commissioner may accept funds from any public or private source for the purposes described in this chapter.

**3. Authority.** In administering Maine's Care Force, the department shall:

A. Develop and deliver essential support worker training and certification programs;

B. Provide health care, housing and subsistence for participants;

C. Deploy essential support workers to underserved areas based on community need;  
and

D. Monitor essential support workers and provide ongoing support.

**4. Eligibility.** To enroll as participants in Maine's Care Force, individuals must:

A. Be at least 18 years of age;

1        B. Commit to a 3-year service contract; and

2        C. Pass a background check and meet screening criteria established by the department.

3        **5. Training.** The department shall develop and administer a training curriculum for  
4 participants, which must include:

5        A. Care of older adults, children and individuals with disabilities;

6        B. Physical activity and gameplay for the purpose of enhancing resilience and  
7 teamwork;

8        C. Life skills, financial literacy and English language training; and

9        D. Certifications in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and medication  
10 management.

11       **6. Participant benefits.** The department shall provide participants with the following:

12       A. Comprehensive health care coverage, including medical, dental and vision  
13 coverage;

14       B. Subsidized housing near placement sites, supported by monthly stipends during  
15 training and placement; and

16       C. Skills certifications.

17       **7. Placement and support of participants.** The department shall coordinate  
18 placement of participants for employment in private homes, facilities and community-  
19 based settings and shall provide ongoing mentorship and mental health resources. The  
20 department shall coordinate with placement sites to provide compensation to participants  
21 for services.

22       **8. Funding.** The department may accept and administer loans, grants or other funds or  
23 gifts, conditional or otherwise, in furtherance of its functions, from the Federal Government  
24 and from other sources, public or private.

25       **9. Evaluation.** The department shall provide for independent evaluations of Maine's  
26 Care Force every 5 years in order to assess effectiveness and recommend improvements.

27       **10. Reports.** Beginning January 1, 2026 and annually thereafter, the department shall  
28 submit a report to the Governor and to the joint committee of the Legislature having  
29 jurisdiction over health and human services matters that includes:

30       A. The number of participants trained and placed during the prior year;

31       B. Retention rates of participants;

32       C. The results of participant satisfaction surveys; and

33       D. A financial statement, including expenditures and funding sources.

34       **§794. Rules**

35       The department shall adopt rules to implement this chapter. Rules adopted pursuant to  
36 this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

37       **Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and  
38 allocations are made.

39       **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF**

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<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>2026-27</b>
All Other	\$32,000,000	\$32,000,000
<b>GENERAL FUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$32,000,000</b>	<b>\$32,000,000</b>

## SUMMARY

This bill establishes Maine's Care Force, a program within the Department of Health and Human Services to place individuals trained as essential support workers by the department in private homes, facilities and community-based settings. It provides for ongoing annual appropriations of \$32,000,000 to support the program.