



Board Members

Jennifer Putnam
Executive Director, Waypoint
Board President

Bill Shanahan
Co-Founder & Senior Advisor, Evernorth
Board Treasurer

Gunnar Hubbard
FAIA, LEED Fellow, Climate-Forward
Catalyst for the AEC Industry
Board Secretary

David Birkhahn
Vice President, TD Bank

Elizabeth Boepple
Partner, Murray, Plumb, & Murray

Cheryl Harkins
Advocate, Homeless Voices for Justice

Ninette Irabaruta
Senior Director, Community Engagement
& Outreach United Way of Southern ME

Chip Newell
Principal, The NewHeight Group

Luc Nya
Mental Health Program Coordinator
OCFS/Corrections Liaison, Maine DHHS

Angela Perkins
Westbrook Resident

Thomas Ptacek
Advocate, Portland Resident

Jennifer Rottmann
Deputy Director/CFO, The Genesis Fund

John Ryan
Co-Founder and Board Chair,
Wright-Ryan Construction

Aaron Shapiro
Retired Community Development
Director, Cumberland County

Kimberly Twitchell
Senior Director of Affordable Housing,
NBT Bank

Staff Contacts

Cullen Ryan
Executive Director

Samantha Messick
Operations Director

Vickey Merrill
Advocacy Director

Chris Harmon
Finance Director

Jenny Jimino
Office Manager

Bree LaCasse
Development Director

Brian Kilgallen
Development Officer

Sarah Gaba
Asset Management Director

Meredith Smith
Supportive Housing Manager

Sarah Derosier
Asset Manager

Sam Lowry
Compliance Manager

April 7, 2025

Re: LD 453, An Act to Require the State to Pay 90 Percent of All General Assistance Expenses of Municipalities and Indian Tribes

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Cullen Ryan, and I am the Executive Director of Community Housing of Maine or CHOM. CHOM creates housing and inclusive communities for vulnerable populations in Maine.

I am testifying in strong support of LD 453, An Act to Require the State to Pay 90 Percent of All General Assistance Expenses of Municipalities and Indian Tribes. *This bill increases from 70% to 90% the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by each municipality and Indian tribe.*

Increasing the reimbursement rate to 90% is the most important move this Legislature can make to ensure that people are served within their home communities.

The financial burden caused by the current reimbursement rate is too much of a barrier for most municipalities to overcome, causing people to leave their communities for larger service center areas.

I am hopeful the 132nd Legislature will make this important fix.

Please support LD 453 and any other bill that would improve, enhance, and expand General Assistance so we can ensure Maine's most vulnerable populations have access to vital safety net resources in their home communities. We will all be better for it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.