

February 23, 2024

Good afternoon Senators Rotundo and Pierce, Representatives Sachs and Gere and honorable members of the Appropriations and Housing Committees. I am here today to testify in support of the emergency shelter and housing recommendations outlined in LD 2214.

My name is Michelle Lamm, I am the executive director of Greater Portland Family Promise. Family Promise has a long, rich history of working in partnership with the faith-based community to shelter families experiencing homelessness. In partnership with the faith-based community we are providing shelter and transitional housing as a pathway to independence and permanent housing.

Family Promise was a recipient of last year's Emergency Housing Relief Fund to operate a family shelter. We originally received funding to operate for 3 months but received two extensions allowing us to operate for 18 months until July 2024.

Lack of affordable housing and high housing costs have left low-income families vulnerable to housing instability, overcrowded living arrangements, eviction, and homelessness. Maine has experienced increased migration from out of states and a surge in households seeking asylum.

Greater Portland Family Promise currently operates a family shelter out of Williston Immanuel Church in Portland and works in tandem with the United Methodist Conference to house families at two former parsonages, one in Portland and one South Portland and with First Parish Church who operates a transitional housing program in Gorham. Family Promise provides screening and placement services and ongoing housing navigation and housing stabilization case management services.

We provide 24-hour staff coverage at the shelter we are currently operating. Each family has their own semi-private sleeping quarters, shared living space and kitchen and bathrooms, case management services which includes benefits access, connection to community resources and housing navigation. We also provide basic needs such as food, diapers, bus cards, laundry soap, and toiletries. Once a family finds housing, we provide furniture and household goods, financial assistance with rent, utilities and transportation and ongoing food support.

In the past year we have provided shelter for 26 families, 94 individuals. We have helped to house 17 families and still have 9 families, 29 individuals residing at the shelter. For many families it can take 1-2 years to find housing.

The renovation, set-up costs to range from \$22,000 (electrical and plumbing for laundry, showers) to \$75,000 (electrical, plumbing, laundry, showers, lighting, fire suppression hood, and water suppression) with an average cost of \$48,500 for renovations.

It is much more costly to operate a 24 hour shelter than a smaller transitional housing program.

**Monthly operating costs - 24-hour staffing**

24-hour staffing	\$ 22,000.00
Rent	\$ 5,500.00
Maintenance	\$ 200.00
Transportation	\$ 400.00
Food	\$ 2,000.00
Supplies	\$ 500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 30,600.00</b>
	<b>\$ 3,400.00 per family</b>

\*Based on 9 families

**Monthly operating costs – transitional housing/case management only**

Case Management	\$ 2,400.00 - \$300 per month per family
Rent	\$ 5,500.00
Maintenance	\$ 200.00
Transportation	\$ 400.00
Food	\$ 2,000.00
Supplies	\$ 500.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 11,000.00</b>
	<b>\$ 1,222.22 per family</b>

\*Based on 9 families

Family Promise would like to see more churches offer up space for shelter and transitional housing to help house families experiencing homelessness. Providing shelter and transitional housing is an immediate solution to the housing crisis here in Maine.

Please vote in support of the \$16 million being proposed to support shelters and transitional housing programs like ours that offer comprehensive services to families.

Sincerely



Michelle Lamm, Executive Director  
Greater Portland Family Promise