



HOMEWORTHY

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3-17-25

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Shannon Shimer and I am the Assistant Director of Social Services at Homeworthy. I am writing to express my fervent support for proposed L.D. 698 regarding Emergency Shelters Funding. In my role at Homeworthy, I support and supervise seven of the 14 case managers in our office. In this current housing climate, I often spend many hours per week strategizing with case managers for the ways to support clients' connection to emergency shelter beds statewide.

I cannot underscore enough how vital shelters are for our neighbors who are experiencing homelessness. Many situations may occur that result in a person needing emergency shelter, including receiving an eviction notice, fleeing domestic violence, the loss of a job and inability to pay rent, someone struggling with substance misuse, and medical incidents that zap someone of their savings. At Homeworthy, we are grateful to have the Hospitality House family shelter, which is an incredible resource in the area but unfortunately does not meet the overwhelming shelter needs of our community.

Many of our clients have deep, multigenerational ties to the area and wish to remain in the midcoast to be closer to employment, family, friends, medical providers, and other social supports. When Hospitality House does not have availability to shelter clients of ours, my first phone call is always to H.O.M.E. Inc. in Orland, which is one hour north of Homeworthy. If H.O.M.E. Inc. is not available, my second phone call is to Tedford Housing in Brunswick—one hour south in the opposite direction of Homeworthy. Consistently, both shelters are full and carrying their own waitlist of clients seeking shelter.

I would like to share a real life example of a client who is currently experiencing homelessness and how their situation is being impacted by the difficulty accessing a shelter bed. We have a client who is a single parent with two school aged children. They have been living in a local motel paid for by General Assistance since early autumn last year. General Assistance cut off their funding in early January after they far exceeded the limits of what their town was legally able to offer. The parent really struggles to complete basic daily tasks and has a Daily Living Skills (DLS) worker who comes once a week to assist them. They rely heavily on their case manager, child's case manager, and the DLS worker to assign and support the client to follow through on tasks including sourcing groceries, following through on referrals and medical appointments, provide Child Protective Services advocacy, and other essential tasks. One of their children has significant behavioral problems and receives a lot of steady, consistent support from their school's special education department. Our shelter has

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Rockland, ME 04841

Family Shelter and Support Services:

169 Old County Road
Rockport, ME 04856

The Landing Place Youth Center:

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Our Mission: Breaking the cycle of poverty and homelessness in Midcoast Maine since 2014.

Homeworthy is a 501(c)3 not for profit, EIN # 46-3136785 fna Knox County Homeless Coalition

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not had a room available for this family since they entered the waiting list in September 2024. In the meantime, this client has been piecing together motel funding on a weekly and sometimes nightly basis in order to stay close to family supports and for the children to remain in their current school. Recently, the client was finally open to considering moving to a shelter with the children; at the time, the closest shelter was more than four hours away in Aroostook County and ultimately, the distance impeded the client's decision and they chose to stay at the motel and frantically call for financial support from churches as far as two hours away. This client has to move out of their motel room this week due to funding and has nowhere to go. They are currently facing splitting up the children and the client is considering moving into a tent in order to remain in the area.

We are at a real crossroads in Maine about how our state supports and sustains homeless shelters. The financial support that L.D. 698 is requesting will go a long way in supporting our most vulnerable neighbors and the agencies and organizations that provide shelter opportunities. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing the outcome of this proposed bill.

Thank you,

Shannon Shimer, M.Ed.
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