



## QUESTIONS FOR WORK SESSION

TO: HHS Committee

FROM: Erik Jorgensen / MaineHousing

**RE: LD 964 A/A To Expand Access Certified Substance Use Disorder Recovery Residence Services**

DATE: April 8, 2021

### Question from Representative Javner:

There was a question about the types of housing assistance available through MaineHousing. All of the housing assistance we provide comes from Federal funds. State rental assistance might come from General Assistance or other DHHS programs but those are not MaineHousing programs.

As part of a pilot program, MaineHousing provides operating support to certain recovery residences, (but not individual rental assistance) for the people who live in those residences, unless they happen to hold Section 8 vouchers.

The point of our proposed amendment is simply to say that if a recovery residence tenant had a section 8 voucher, we could not consider the recovery residence's certification status a factor in providing that rental assistance. Section 8 vouchers require that units meet certain safety and habitability standards, but certification of a facility and its programming would not be a factor.

I am attaching for the committee's information some background on rental vouchers.

### Question from Representative Craven:

Representative Craven asked how programs qualified for the MaineHousing Recovery Residences Pilot Program.

To be eligible for the Program, the following eligibility requirements must be met:

- 1) Certified by MARR as a Level I, II, or III residence at the time of funding;
- 2) Allow for persons receiving medication-assisted treatment;
- 3) Conform to any voluntary certification standards for recovery residences established by rule by the Department of Health and Human Services;
- 4) Pass a housing quality inspection conducted by MaineHousing; and
- 5) Eligible to receive federal and state funds.

(over for more)

## **Selection Criteria**

The program initially anticipated supporting up to ten recovery residences based on these qualifications. It subsequently funded 13 programs, and now there are 16 residences participating, with the operating support provided based on the gap between residents' rent payments and the projected cost of operating the residence.

Though it is a pilot program it is anticipated to continue at least through the next couple of years.