

131ST LEGISLATURE FIRST REGULAR SESSION / FIRST SPECIAL SESSION: DECEMBER 7, 2022 – JUNE 21, 2023

USEFUL LINKS

- Maine Legislature Homepage: <http://legislature.maine.gov/>
- Maine Legislature YouTube Channels for Legislative Committees: <https://www.youtube.com/mainestatelegislature>
- Sign up to Testify and/or submit testimony here: <https://www.mainelegislature.org/testimony/>

Common Acronyms: AFA = Appropriations and Financial Affairs. HHS = Health and Human Services. OTP = Ought to Pass. OTP-AM = Ought to Pass as Amended. ONTP = Ought Not to Pass.

BILLS

Color code: **Orange font = Budget bill;** **Black font = Homelessness related bill;** **Blue font = Service related;** **Green font = Housing/Rental Assistance related;** **Purple font = General Assistance & Safety Net related bills;** **Pink font = Food security related bills;** **highlighted in yellow = passed the House and/or Senate;** **highlighted in green = signed by the Governor and will become Public Law;** **Red text = the bill is now dead.**

BUDGET BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 258	Governor's Bill	Governor's Biennial Budget	<p>Signed by the Governor</p> <p>Click here for the bill as enacted as Chaptered Law .</p>	<p>As Amended (removes emergency preamble):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PART TT: This Part requires the transfer of \$5,000,000 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Maine State Housing Authority, Housing Authority - State program, Other Special Revenue Funds account. This Part also requires the State Controller, as the 5th priority transfer at the close of fiscal year 2022-23 only, after all transfers are made pursuant to statute, to transfer from the available balance of the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund up to \$65,000,000 to the Maine State Housing Authority, Housing Authority - State program, Other Special Revenue Funds account. This Part also requires that up to \$35,000,000 of the funds transferred under this Part must be used to fund the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program and the remainder must be used to fund the Low-income Housing Tax Credit Program. • PART AAAA: This Part establishes the Housing First Program within the Department of Health and Human Services to facilitate the delivery of stabilization and support services to residents of properties established or developed to provide permanent housing to persons who have been experiencing chronic homelessness and to fund technical assistance, administered by the Maine State Housing Authority, for the development of housing consistent with the program. The Part requires the department to ensure that funding supplements existing, and future services provided under associated programs such as the MaineCare program and the housing outreach and member engagement provider program. The program is funded from the real estate transfer tax by depositing 1/2 of the funds that would otherwise be deposited into the General Fund into the Housing First Fund created by this Part. The Part authorizes 2 positions within the Department of Health and

				<p><i>Human Services under the Housing First Fund. The Part directs the Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine State Housing Authority to jointly adopt rules to administer the program and requires them to report annually to the joint standing committee or joint select committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the program. The Part also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to apply to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for state plan amendments to align certain MaineCare rules with the Housing First Program. <u>See Budget Language Attachment for more information.</u></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PART EEEE: Statewide Hunger Relief Program. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, on or before June 30, 2023, the State Controller shall transfer \$2,000,000 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Statewide Hunger Relief Program, Other Special Revenue Funds account to provide funds for a grant for capital support to a Portland-based food security hub with partnerships or capacity for statewide distribution to enable increased production of hot meals each day for homeless, sheltered or food insecure persons. • PART KKKK: Department of Education to develop pilot program. The Department of Education's office of school and student supports shall establish a 2-year pilot program to help students avoid homelessness. As soon as funds are available for the pilot program, the department shall provide McKinney-Vento liaisons access to emergency financial assistance for the families of students in an amount up to \$750 per student. Emergency assistance may be provided for services authorized for funding under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act in addition to assistance for other housing-related needs such as rental assistance, utilities and critical home repairs and other assistance that will help a student avoid homelessness. • PART RRRR: <i>Supporting Emergency Shelters to Address Homelessness:</i> \$12,000,000 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Maine State Housing Authority, Emergency Housing Relief Fund Program, Other Special Revenue Funds account to provide funds for short-term emergency housing, legal services and other wraparound settlement supports intended to support individuals in becoming established in a community or in the workforce. (One-time funding)
--	--	--	--	---

HOMELESSNESS BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 3	Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross (Emergency)	An Act to Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to Aid Residents with High Heating Costs and to Finalize the COVID Pandemic Relief Payment Program	Signed by the Governor	This bill provides relief to certain Maine households to assist them with high costs for home heating and other purposes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-Term Housing Support: \$21 million to bolster the Emergency Housing Relief Fund created by Governor Mills and the Legislature earlier this year that supports emergency housing and emergency shelters to prevent people from experiencing homelessness this winter.
LD 1422	Rep. Michael Brennan	An Act to End Homelessness and Assist Students Who Are Homeless by Establishing a Housing Voucher Program and Providing Site-based Housing Services	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	This bill establishes a housing voucher program for homeless students under the authority of the Maine State Housing Authority and appropriates one-time funding of \$2 million in fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25. The bill directs the Maine State Housing Authority to identify 3 sites in Maine to be used for a site-based housing program and appropriates one-time funding of \$3.5 million in fiscal years 2023-24 and 2024-25 to the Department of Health and Human Services to support the program.
LD 1609	Sen. Joseph Rafferty	An Act to Prevent Student Homelessness	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	Included in the Budget Change Package. This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. The bill would enact provisions of law to prevent student homelessness.
LD 1844	Rep. Poppy Arford	An Act to Support Emergency Housing Facility Construction, Renovation and Acquisition Statewide by Creating a Matching Grant Program	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	This bill establishes the Emergency Housing Matching Grant Program to award grants at \$10,000 per emergency housing bed up to \$1,000,000 per recipient to program providers to construct, renovate or acquire new or existing buildings to house emergency housing or shelter programs, including emergency housing 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and housing navigation and case management services in the building after occupancy. Recipients must match the grants on a one-to-one basis from a source other than state funding. The bill also includes an appropriations and allocations section. – total amount each year for the Program is \$10,000,500

SERVICE BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 328	Sen. Trey Stewart	An Act to Improve Mental Health in Maine	HHS Committee Tabled at 5/16 Work Session – Carry Over Requested	This bill brings MaineCare regulations into alignment with Dartmouth Assertive Community Treatment Scale fidelity items, ensuring high-quality, evidence based Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) services for Maine residents with psychotic disorders and high needs.

LD 540	Rep. Melanie Sachs	An Act to Establish Peer Respite Centers for Adults with Mental Health Challenges in Maine	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	This bill requires the department to establish through contracts 2 peer respite centers in the State for persons 18 years of age or older. The centers must provide 24-hour intentional peer support to persons in need of mental health services on a voluntary, short-term basis.
LD 599	Rep. Michael Brennan	An Act to Provide Support Services for a Transitional Housing Program for Homeless Persons	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	This bill provides ongoing funding for support services for a transitional housing program in Portland.
LD 859	Sen. Joseph Baldacci	An Act to Assess, Develop, Implement and Fund the Reuse of Existing Facilities at Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center to Provide Mental Health, Substance Use Disorder and Homelessness Services	Signed by the Governor	Resolve, directing the Maine DHHS to establish a stakeholder group with the City of Bangor, Northern Light Hospital, St. Joseph Hospital, the Superintendent of DDPC, and DAFS for the express purpose of reviewing the existing structures on the DDPC campus and which buildings should be demolished and which buildings can be rehabilitated and to undertake discussions concerning the establishment of transitional, supportive housing on campus for persons suffering from mental illness and, or co-occurring diagnoses. In addition, the stakeholders can discuss any possible collaborations which could take place to better utilize the campus for the health and well-being of the public and those most in need of mental health care.
LD 1050	Sen. Eric Brakey	An Act to Request a Federal Waiver for Presumptive Work Eligibility for Asylum Seekers	Signed by the Governor	This resolve directs the Commissioner of Labor to request a waiver from the United States Department of Homeland Security, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to allow an asylum seeker in the State, if the asylum seeker has applied for asylum and has not been denied, eligibility to work in the State for the 6-month period immediately after the asylum seeker has applied for asylum while awaiting a final determination on the asylum seeker's application and for the time period while an asylum seeker's work permit has expired and is pending renewal by the Federal Government.
LD 1633	Sen. Pinny Beebe-Center	An Act to Establish a Community-based Reentry Program in All Department of Corrections Facilities	Additional Work Session on 5/24 – Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee – Tabled – Carry Over Requested	This bill creates a community-based reentry program administered by a community based organization at each correctional facility operated by the Department of Corrections. The program is a peer-supported program that provides individualized reentry plans to incarcerated individuals starting from 2 years prior to an individual's release, involving multiple meetings to determine the individual's education, job training, substance use disorder treatment, housing and other needs subsequent to release and follow-up meetings after release to support the individual's reentry into

				the community and to reduce or prevent recidivism. This bill also creates the Peer Reentry Review Board, which oversees, advises, studies data and makes recommendations to the community-based reentry program and reports to the Commissioner of Corrections and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over criminal justice and public safety matters.
LD 1781	Rep. Drew Gattine	An Act to Establish Permanent Funding for the Homeless Substance Use Disorder Program	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	This bill establishes the Homeless Substance Use Disorder Service Program to provide rapid access to low-barrier treatment for substance use disorder and stable housing to support recovery. The program is similar to the homeless opioid users service engagement pilot project established in Resolve 2019, chapter 105, but the program is not limited to opioid use and provides additional services including transportation, community services and inpatient treatment services. The evaluation of the pilot project must be used to inform the rules implementing the program and the contractors and subcontractors of the pilot project must be included in developing the rules.

HOUSING/RENTAL ASSISTANCE BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
★ LD 2	Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross	An Act to Address Maine's Housing Crisis	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	Included in the Budget Change Package. This bill has been amended: This bill establishes the Housing First Program within the Department of Health and Human Services to facilitate the delivery of stabilization and support services to residents of properties established or developed to provide permanent housing to persons who have been chronically homeless and to fund technical assistance, administered by the Maine State Housing Authority, for the development of housing consistent with the program. The bill requires the department to ensure that fund supplements existing and future services provided under programs like MaineCare and the Housing Outreach and Member Engagement Program is funded from the real estate transfer tax by depositing half of the funds that would otherwise be deposited into the General Fund into the Housing First Fund created by the bill. The bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services and the Maine State Housing Authority to jointly adopt rules to administer the program and requires them to report annually to the Joint Standing or Joint Select Committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness



				of the program. The bill also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to apply to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to align certain federal programs with the Housing First model.
LD 1074	Sen. Matthea Daughtry	An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund New Affordable Housing for Low-Income Households	Public Hearing on 4/25 - AFA Committee	The funds provided by this bond issue, in the amount of \$100,000,000, will be used to build new affordable housing for low-income households through the construction of new structures and adaptive reuse of existing structures.
LD 654	Sen. Matthew Pouliot	Resolve, Directing the Finance Authority of Maine to Establish a Pilot Program to Encourage the Development of Affordable Accessory Dwelling Units	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	This resolve directs the Finance Authority of Maine to establish a 2-year pilot program to encourage the development of accessory dwelling units in the State. The program must buy down interest rates to levels below market rates for up to 100 community bank loans for accessory dwelling units until the program ends. The authority must submit annual reports to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters regarding the usage of the program, the first such report to be made no later than November 6, 2024.
LD 1706	Rep. Marc Malon	An Act to Clarify Statewide Laws Regarding Affordable Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units	Signed by the Governor	This bill makes changes to provisions of law regarding affordable housing and accessory dwelling units by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removing from the definition of "affordable housing development" that the developer designates the development as affordable; 2. Clarifying that municipal approval of an affordable housing development for purposes of timing of the execution of a restrictive covenant means granting final approval, including issuing an occupancy permit; 3. Clarifying that setback requirements are just one type of dimensional requirements; 4. Changing language stating where housing is allowed or permitted to refer to where residential uses, including as a conditional use, are allowed or permitted; 5. Allowing accessory dwelling units on nonconforming lots, including in shoreland zones, if the accessory dwelling units do not further increase the nonconformity; 6. Allowing accessory dwelling units built without municipal approval, including accessory dwelling units in shoreland zones, if the accessory dwelling units otherwise meet state and municipal requirements for accessory dwelling units; and 7. Allowing municipalities to approve accessory dwelling units through a permitting process that does not require planning board approval.

LD 45	Sen. Anne Carney	An Act to Prevent Retaliatory Evictions	Signed by the Governor	This bill provides that in an action of forcible entry and detainer there is a rebuttable presumption that the action was commenced in retaliation against the tenant if, within 6 months prior to the commencement of the action, the tenant has asserted the tenant's rights pursuant to the laws requiring notice to the tenant of a rent increase, the laws prohibiting a rent increase for a dwelling unit that is in violation of the warranty of habitability or a municipal ordinance limiting rent increase. It also provides that to rebut the presumption of retaliation, a plaintiff in a forcible entry and detainer action must show by a preponderance of the evidence that a reason set forth in law or a violation of a lease provision is a substantial reason for bringing the action.
LD 109	Rep. H Landry	An Act to Improve Safety for Individuals Living in Recovery Residences	Passed the House on 6/6 and the Senate on 6/8. Placed on the Special Study Table pending Final Passage	Current law provides that a certified substance use disorder recovery residence is treated as a family residence for the purposes of life safety code requirements, regardless of its size, layout or number of residents. This bill repeals that provision to require such recovery residences to meet the life safety code requirements for similarly situated buildings and housing establishments.
LD 226	Rep. Rebecca Millett	An Act to Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	This bill provides one-time funds to MaineHousing in the amount of \$100,000,000 in fiscal year 2023-24 and in fiscal year 2024-25 (only these FYs) to increase affordable housing stock in the State.
LD 314	Sen. Craig Hickman	An Act to Establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Housing in Maine	Referred to Housing Committee – Carry Over Requested	This bill would establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Housing in Maine. The commission would be a quasi-independent agency funded through the Department of Economic and Community Development. Members of the commission would include housing advocates and organizations, policy makers, housing developers, housing experts, landlords and tenants. The commission would identify the hurdles to developing more housing units and recommend solutions to each branch of government.
LD 330	Sen. Mike Tipping	An Act to Ensure Legal Representation for Residents Facing Eviction	Signed by the Governor	This bill would require the development and implementation of a program to ensure legal representation for residents facing eviction. Development of the program would employ best practices and apply recent research.
LD 337	Rep. Cheryl Golek	An Act to Amend the Regulations of Manufactured Housing to Increase Affordable Housing	Referred to Housing Committee – Carry Over Requested	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would amend the regulation of manufactured housing to increase the amount of affordable housing.
LD 371	Sen. Jeffrey Timberlake	An Act to Address Certain Local Zoning Ordinances	State and Local Government Committee Divided Report – Carry Over Requested	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill proposes to address certain local zoning ordinances.



LD 387	Rep. Mark Blier	An Act to Promote Affordable Housing by Providing a Tax Exemption for Housing Choice Vouchers	Referred to Housing Committee – Carry Over Requested	This bill provides an income tax deduction for income received by a landlord as tenant based housing assistance payments in the form of Section 8 housing choice vouchers administered by the Maine State Housing Authority.
LD 691	Rep. Chris Kessler	An Act to Reduce Barriers to Housing by Prohibiting Tenant Application Fees	Signed by the Governor	This bill prohibits a landlord from requiring a person to pay a fee in order to submit an application to enter into an agreement to rent a residential dwelling unit.
LD 701	Rep. Chris Kessler	An Act to Increase the Notice Period for Rent Increases	Signed by the Governor	This bill increases the notice period for rent increases from 45 days to 90 days.
LD 721	Sen. Matthea Daughtry	An Act to Preserve Historic Buildings and Promote Affordable Housing	Referred to the Housing Committee – Carry Over Requested	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would enact provisions of law to preserve historic buildings and promote affordable housing.
LD 724	Sen. Cameron Reny	An Act to Expand Workforce Housing in Rural Maine by Funding the Maine State Housing Authority's Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program	Signed by the Governor	This bill provides one-time funds in the amount of \$10M each year in fiscal year 2023-24 and fiscal year 2024-25 only to the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program within the Maine State Housing Authority for the development of smaller affordable rental housing projects.
LD 774	Sen. Matthew Pouliot	An Act to Require the Maine State Housing Authority to Report to the Legislature on the Home Fund	Signed by the Governor	This bill requires the Maine State Housing Authority to report annually to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over appropriations and financial affairs with a full accounting of how revenues transferred to the Housing Opportunities for Maine Fund to be used to support the creation of new housing units through new construction or adaptive reuse were spent, looking back 10 years
LD 853	Rep. Benjamin Collings	RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to Housing	Referred to the Housing Committee – Carry Over Requested	<p>This resolution proposes to amend the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to housing.</p> <p>Constitutional referendum - the municipal officers of this State shall notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding a statewide election, at a statewide election held in the month of November following the passage of this resolution, to vote upon the ratification of the amendment proposed in this resolution by voting upon the following question: "Do you favor amending the Constitution of Maine to declare that all individuals have a natural, inherent and unalienable right to housing?"</p>
LD 1116	Rep. Laura Supica	An Act to Provide Rural Sober Living Housing for Mothers	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	This bill requires the Maine State Housing Authority to contract for the construction of at least 15 housing units, to be located in certified recovery residences and in counties with a county seat of no more than 35,000 residents. The certified recovery residences are required to serve mothers recovering from substance use disorder and promote reunification with minor children and are required to be staffed with peer-to-peer staff. The bill establishes the Rural Recovery Residence Fund to receive funds to support the

				certified recovery residences. The bill requires that the Maine State Housing Authority distribute funds through a competitive bid process to grantees, who will provide a minimum of 1:1 matching funds.
LD 1294	Rep. Traci Gere	An Act to Implement Several Recommendations of the Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Land Use Regulations and Short-term Rentals	Referred to Housing Committee – Carry Over requested	This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208. This bill would implement certain recommendations of the Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Land Use Regulations and Short-term Rentals.
LD 1298	Rep. Charles Skold	An Act to Allow a Local Option Sales Tax on Short-term Lodging to Fund Affordable Housing	Referred to Taxation Committee – Carry Over requested	This bill allows a municipality to impose a local option sales tax of 1% on short-term lodging that is subject to the state sales and use tax if approved by referendum of the voters in that municipality. The revenue from the local option sales tax must be distributed to the municipality imposing the local option sales tax. The distributed revenue must be used in municipal programs that support affordable housing development in that municipality, including rental assistance for lower income households or moderate-income households. Revenue received by a municipality may not be used to reduce or eliminate funding otherwise due the municipality under other provisions of law. The local option sales tax may not take effect before July 1, 2024.
LD 1490	Rep. Chris Kessler	An Act to Reduce Rental Housing Costs by Eliminating Additional Fees at or Prior to the Commencement of Tenancy	Judiciary Committee – Carry Over requested	This bill provides that at or prior to the commencement of a tenancy, a landlord, the landlord's agent or a real estate broker may not require a tenant or prospective tenant to pay an amount in excess of the rent for the first full month of occupancy, a security deposit and the purchase and installation cost for a key and lock.
LD 1493	Rep. Raegan LaRochelle	An Act to Increase Affordable Housing by Expanding Tax Increment Financing	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	This bill authorizes the creation of Pine Tree Housing Zones to allow retained value resulting from a tax increment financing district in a municipality to be used anywhere in the municipality for the purposes of the purchase, rehabilitation or establishment of affordable and workforce housing in the municipality. The bill provides for a sales tax exemption for the associated purchasing of goods and services and electricity for a qualified project in a Pine Tree Housing Zone.
LD 1505	Rep. Kristen Cloutier	An Act to Amend the Maine Cooperative Affordable Housing Ownership Act	Referred to Housing Committee – Carry Over requested	This bill amends the Maine Cooperative Affordable Housing Ownership Act to include group equity cooperatives. It also provides that a housing assistance program must be made reasonably available to residents of housing cooperatives.
LD 1540	Rep. Rebecca Millett	An Act to Create the Stable Home Fund Program	Emergency bill requiring 2/3's majority vote – failed 2/3's majority vote in the House but Passed in the Senate to be Placed on the Special	This bill, which includes an emergency preamble and emergency clause, creates the Stable Home Fund and the Stable Home Fund Program within MaineHousing. The purpose of the program is to provide persons earning up to 60% of the median income for an area as defined by HUD with \$300 per month in rental assistance paid directly to the landlord for up to 24 months or until those persons secure housing by means of a housing voucher program

			Appropriations Table on 6/21. Sent back to the House for concurrence where it failed 2/3's needed for final passage.	administered by HUD under the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, Section 8, as amended, or secure a subsidized housing unit. The bill directs MaineHousing to administer the program except that MaineHousing may delegate the administration of the program and provide appropriate funding from the fund to a municipal housing authority with respect to eligible persons located within the municipal housing authority's jurisdiction.
LD 1672	Rep. Traci Gere	An Act to Establish an Affordable Housing Permitting Process	Referred to Housing Committee – Carry Over requested	This bill establishes the Affordable Housing Development Review Board under the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning in order to issue permits for the development of affordable housing and workforce housing.
LD 1673	Rep. Traci Gere	An Act to Encourage Affordable Housing and Mixed-use Development by Establishing a Thriving Corridors Program	Public Hearing on 5/12; Work Session 5/26 - Housing Committee – Tabled – Carry Over requested	This bill establishes the Thriving Corridors Program within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services in order to assist municipalities with technical support and funding to redevelop high-impact corridors near downtowns, village centers or crossroads into mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable neighborhoods by infilling and redeveloping underutilized land.
LD 1710	Rep. Cheryl Golek	An Act to Establish the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program and Amend the Laws Regarding Tenants and the Municipal General Assistance Program	Public Hearing on 5/12; Work Session 5/26; Work Session 5/30 - Housing Committee – Tabled – Carry Over requested	This bill requires the Maine State Housing Authority to establish and administer the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program. The program must include a rental assistance component to assist individuals with the cost of rent and a rental guarantee component to encourage landlords to work with the program and other rental assistance programs in the State. The bill also creates the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program Fund under the Maine State Housing Authority to carry out the program. The bill appropriates \$75,500,000 of ongoing funds annually. The bill amends the Maine Human Rights Act to include as prohibited acts the discrimination against a tenant because the tenant participates in a federal, state or local tenant-based rental assistance program and requires owners of more than 10 residential rental units to ensure that at least 10% of the rental units that they rent meet the definition of affordable housing. The bill amends the laws governing the municipal general assistance program by redefining maximum levels of assistance to better reflect the cost of basic necessities experienced by persons who participate in the program. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a comprehensive application form for applicants of general assistance, emergency assistance and rental assistance. It requires municipalities to exceed the maximum levels of assistance in order to alleviate an emergency and requires the State to reimburse municipalities for 100% of additional expenditures. It requires municipalities to provide culturally appropriate and trauma-informed services when

				<p>administering the general assistance program. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide training to ensure that the municipalities comply with the requirements of the program.</p> <p>The bill amends the laws governing the real estate transfer tax by creating a graduated tax based upon the sales price of the real estate and dedicates those funds to assist in funding the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program. The bill amends the Maine Fair Debt Collection Practices Act by further defining a debt collector as any entity that attempts to collect unpaid rent where the rent is unaffordable. It prohibits any entity from reporting to a credit reporting agency the nonpayment of rent that is unaffordable.</p>
LD 1721	Sen. Jill Duson	An Act to Create Transitional Housing Communities for Homeless Populations in the State	Public Hearing on 5/12; Work Session 5/25 - Housing Committee – Tabled – Carry Over requested	<p>This bill creates the Transitional Housing Community Construction Program Fund under MaineHousing to create transitional housing communities, which are clusters of transitional housing dwelling units for homeless individuals and families to provide stability and to allow the individuals and families to transition to permanent housing. The bill directs that transitional housing communities be created throughout the State designed to cover all 16 counties. The bill directs DHHS, through independent housing services under its administration of assisted housing programs, to coordinate, arrange or provide services including job training and health care services for residents of transitional housing communities. The bill also provides one-time funding MaineHousing to create transitional housing communities and funding to the department to provide independent housing services to residents of transitional housing.</p>
LD 1864	Rep. James Boyle	An Act to Increase Maine's Housing Supply by Prohibiting Certain Zoning Requirements in Areas Where Public Sewer and Water Infrastructure Are Available and in Designated Growth Areas	Public Hearing on 5/19; Work Session 5/26 – Housing Committee – Tabled – Carry Over requested	<p>This bill provides restrictions on municipal ordinance requirements related to minimum lot size in areas where water and sewer infrastructure are available and in areas where water and sewer infrastructure are not available but that are within designated growth areas. For a housing development served by a public, special district or other centrally managed water system and a public, special district or other comparable sewer system and that is located in an area in which dwelling units are allowed, a municipality must allow a dwelling unit on a lot with a minimum size of 5,000 square feet. For a housing development located in a designated growth area that is not served by a public, special district or other centrally managed water system and a public, special district or other comparable sewer system, that complies with minimum lot size requirements in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, chapter 423-A and that is located in an area in which dwelling units are allowed, a municipality must allow a dwelling unit on a lot with a minimum size of 20,000 square feet.</p>

				The bill also provides limits to ordinance provisions relating to lot coverage, road frontage and setback requirements.
LD 1867	Rep. Grayson Lookner	An Act to Establish the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority	Public Hearing on 5/19; Work Session 5/26 – Housing Committee – Tabled – Carry Over requested	This bill establishes the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority within the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority to develop, own, lease and maintain mixed-income, permanently affordable public residential housing in this State.
LD 1904	Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross	An Act to Enact the Fair Chance Housing Act	Public Hearing on 5/15; Work Session 5/24 – Judiciary Committee – Tabled – Carry Over requested	This bill establishes the Maine Fair Chance Housing Act, the purpose of which is to ensure that a person is not denied housing based solely on the existence of a history of criminal convictions. This bill prohibits a housing provider from considering an applicant's criminal history until after the housing provider determines that the applicant meets all other qualifications for tenancy. A person who is aggrieved by a violation of the Maine Fair Chance Housing Act by a housing provider may file a grievance with the Maine Human Rights Commission and, if it is a violation by a private housing provider, may bring a civil action in court.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE & SAFETY NET BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 80	Rep. Meyer	An Act to Improve Family Economic Security Under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program	Signed by the Governor	This bill amends the provisions of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or “TANF,” program that relate to income disregards for the purposes of calculating a recipient’s benefits.
LD 81	Rep. Meyer	An Act to Address Recovery Residence Participation in the Municipal General Assistance Program	Signed by the Governor	This bill requires a municipality to issue a general assistance housing assistance payment to the operator of a certified recovery residence upon request by an eligible person rather than to a landlord, including a property owner.
LD 1426	Rep. Kristi Mathieson	An Act to Secure Housing for the Most Vulnerable Maine Residents by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal General Assistance	HHS Committee – Tabled at 5/22 Work Session – Carry Over Requested	This bill: 1. Requires an overseer, no later than the 120th day following appointment or election, to complete training on the requirements of the municipal general assistance program; 2. Replaces, for determining the maximum level of assistance, the fair market value determination with setting the assistance at the equivalent amount of rental assistance provided for tenant-based housing choice vouchers under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937 except that the benefit level may not be less than the difference between the applicant's income and 110% of the area's fair market rent; 3. Provides that if general assistance is being used to pay rent for an applicant whose rent is subject to a lease an overseer may redetermine the applicant's eligibility annually; 4. Increases from 70% to 90% the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by a municipality and each Indian tribe;

				<p>5. Directs the Department of Health and Human Services to reimburse each municipality for 5% of the direct costs of paying benefits incurred through its general assistance program;</p> <p>6. Directs the Department of Health and Human Services to establish and provide overseers with access to a statewide database for tracking applicants for the general assistance program and expenses relating to the program; and</p> <p>7. Requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide assistance to municipalities with regard to processing applications for the general assistance program and directs the department to establish a hotline that is available 24 hours per day in order to provide consistent, accurate advice to overseers. It also requires the department to respond to requests for assistance within 24 hours</p>
LD 1664	Sen. Marianne Moore	An Act to Increase Reimbursement Under the General Assistance Program	Passed to be Enacted, placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted	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.
LD 1675	Rep. Michael Brennan	An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the General Assistance Program Regarding Eligibility, Housing Assistance and State Reimbursement and to Establish a Working Group	HHS Committee – Tabled at 5/22 Work Session – Carry Over Requested	This bill amends the law governing the General Assistance (GA) program to provide that a municipality must calculate housing assistance equivalent to the amount of rental assistance provided for tenant-based housing choice vouchers under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937. The bill extends the period of eligibility from one month to 6 months. Beginning July 1, 2023, when a municipality incurs net general assistance costs in excess of 0.008% of that municipality's most recent state valuation relative to the state fiscal year for which reimbursement is being issued, DHHS must reimburse the municipality for 90% of the amount in excess of these expenditures. The bill also directs the department to establish a working group to study and make recommendations related to a uniform intake process and the conversion of the GA program into a housing assistance program.
LD 1732	Rep. Michele Meyer	An Act to Expand the General Assistance Program	HHS Committee – Tabled at 5/22 Work Session – Carry Over Requested	<p>This bill changes the municipal general assistance program in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It requires overseers and designated or appointed municipal officials administering the program to complete training within 120 days of election or appointment; 2. It requires municipalities to accept applications for general assistance during regular business hours; 3. It amends provisions governing the municipality of responsibility to increase the provision of assistance from 30 days to 6 months when a municipality assists an applicant in relocating to another community and from 6 months to 12 months when an applicant is

				<p>residing in a group home, shelter, rehabilitation center, nursing home or hospital or in a hotel, motel or other temporary housing;</p> <p>4. It increases, from 70% to 90%, the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of general assistance incurred by each municipality and Indian tribe. It also provides that, if a municipality elects to determine need without consideration of funds from a municipally controlled trust, the State is required to reimburse the municipality for 66 2/3% of the amount in excess of expenditures;</p> <p>5. It provides state reimbursement for additional program costs, including emergency general assistance, temporary housing, interpreter services and administrative expenses; and</p> <p>6. It requires the Department of Health and Human Services to provide the services necessary to support municipalities, including education and training for certain state employees, 24-hour technical assistance, written decisions and a database.</p>
--	--	--	--	--

FOOD SECURITY BILLS

Bill #	Sponsor	Title	Status & Committee	Notes
LD 568	Rep. Matthew Pouliot	An Act to Provide Funding for the State Fund to Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives	Passed to be Enacted in the House and Senate. Placed on the Special Appropriations Table	This bill provides ongoing General Fund appropriations of \$600,000 to the Fund To Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The bill also removes the \$50,000 limit on matching contributions from the fund criteria.
LD 1584	Rep. Holly Stover	An Act to Provide Funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to Temporarily Restore Benefits Being Reduced by the Federal Government	Passed to be Enacted in the House and Senate. Placed on the Special Appropriations Table pending Passage to be Enacted.	<p>Under the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the Federal Government provided emergency benefit allotments under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. These emergency benefit allotments are scheduled to expire March 1, 2023.</p> <p>This bill extends for 6 months, but on a decreasing basis, the amount of benefits available under SNAP by providing General Fund funds to provide the following level of benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In March 2023, 100% of the federal emergency benefit allotment; 2. In April 2023, 75% of the federal emergency benefit allotment; 3. In May 2023, 50% of the federal emergency benefit allotment; and 4. From June through August 2023, 25% of the federal emergency benefit allotment. <p>Beginning in September 2023, an additional amount is not provided.</p>
LD 1612	Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross	An Act to Address Food Insecurity and Support Local Agriculture	Passed to be Enacted in the House and Senate. Placed on the Special Appropriations Table	<p>Included in the Budget Change Package.</p> <p>This bill provides one-time funding for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to contract with the Preble Street Food Security Hub to help address food insecurity</p>

			pending Passage to be Enacted.	throughout the State. The department is required to report on the distribution of the funds by Preble Street.
LD 1940	Sen. Craig Hickman	An Act to Promote Consistent Policies within Growth Management Programs in Order to Increase Food Security and Economic Resiliency in Local Communities	Referred to Housing Committee – Carry Over requested	<p>This bill amends the laws governing planning and land use regulation to encourage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Municipalities to ensure that the language and requirements in charters, policies, codes, regulations, bylaws and fees align with each other and meet the overall intent of the comprehensive plan approved by the legislative body; 2. Municipalities to develop policies that assess community needs and environmental, food security and economic resiliency effects of municipal regulations, lessen the effect of excessive parking requirements for buildings in downtowns and on main streets and provide for alternative approaches for compliance relating to the reuse of upper floors of buildings in downtowns and on main streets; and 3. In the development of affordable housing, municipalities and multimunicipal regions to establish policies that assess food security and economic resiliency effects of municipal regulations.