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Maine Department of Health and Human Services

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EMERGENCY SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST -- 10/11/2007:

BACKGROUND:

Bridging Rental Assistance Program: The Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) is a housing voucher program developed by the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Office of Adult Mental Health. It was established in recognition that people with psychiatric disabilities are often unable to afford to rent safe and decent housing of their choice in the community.

BRAP is designed to assist individuals, including Class Members, with housing assistance for up to 24 months or until they are awarded a Housing Choice Voucher (aka Section 8) or other federal subsidy, whichever comes first. For this reason, all units subsidized by BRAP funding must meet federally established rent and quality standards so recipients may continue to reside in their apartments once awarded a Section 8 Voucher, if they so choose.

Program participants pay 51% of their income for rent. BRAP subsidizes the remaining portion of the rent up to the Fair Market Rent. The program serves persons who have recently been discharged from a psychiatric hospital, who are homeless, living in sub-standard housing, or who are leaving a DHHS funded group home to more independent housing. Since inception in 1994, the BRAP program has issued 5,130 vouchers totaling over \$19,000,000.

JUSTIFICATION:

Current funding for FY 2008 is \$2,792,414 which can support an average census of 600 persons given the current regional distribution of vouchers through out the state. The June 2007 census is 641 persons and growing. As a result, in July of 2007, the wait list protocol has been reactivated and will remain in place until the census drops or more funding can be allocated.

Other factors resulting in a growing financial demand on the program include:

- HUD's published projections for increases in the Fair Market Rent are more than double that of prior year increases. In several jurisdictions, including one of the most expensive and heaviest used, Cumberland, York, and Sagadahoc County, the FMR will be going up by 10% in October of 2007.
- The \$180,000 line item budget for BRAP, originally targeted for FY '08, was derived by estimating the average annual increase of HUD rents at 4%. As noted above, this year, HUD increased it's Fair Market Rents by up to 10%. In addition, these dollars were deferred to FY 09. This request assumes these dollars will remain in tact for FY '09.

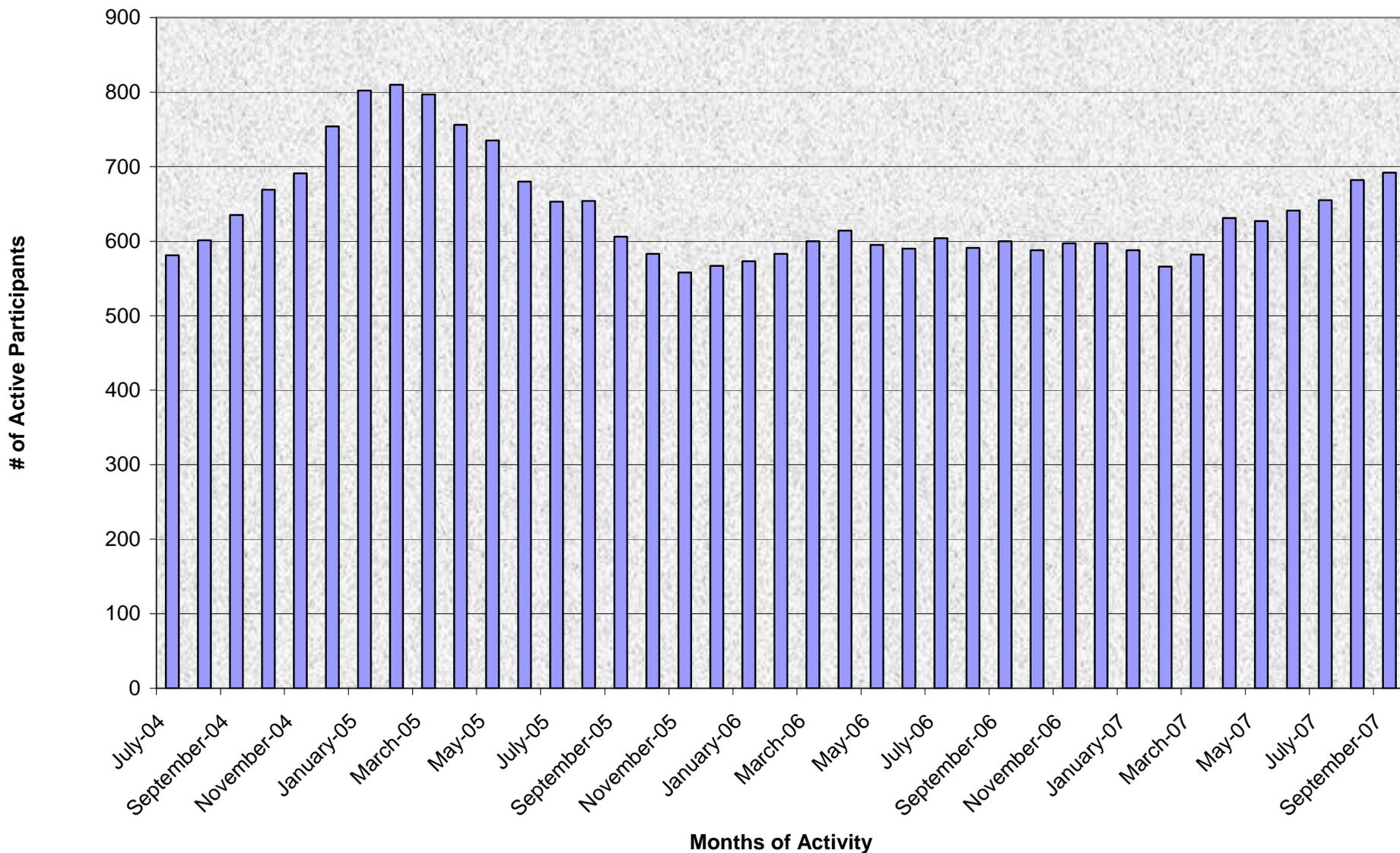
Our vision is Maine people living safe, healthy and productive lives.

- With the exception of Aroostook County, every Public Housing Authority in the state has closed their wait lists to new applicants. Typical wait lists are projected at three to five years.
- Since July of 2004 the census rate has increased by more than 16%. See *BRAP Census—Trending Analysis* showing monthly activity since July of 2004.
- As mental health systems across the state further incorporate best practice principals of housing persons in least restrictive settings, in the community, the census pressure on BRAP can be expected to continue to increase. See *Top 20 Call Categories* from the 211 system indicating Mental Health and Housing/shelter Services as the number 2 and 3 ranked type of calls in the state with over 2,500 inquiries for each. In calendar year 2007, Housing calls have topped the inquiry list each month.

REQUEST:

The program will need \$475,000 of Emergency Supplemental funds in addition to the \$180,000 already budgeted in FY 09. This allocation will increase the census capacity by 60 persons and absorb the actual FY 08 and estimated FY 09 rent increases which are beyond our control and set by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

BRAP Census--Trending Analysis



2-1-1 Maine: Top 20 Call Categories July 2006 - May 2007

