



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF Policy Innovation and the Future

KEY HOUSING INITIATIVES

Approved in the First Session of Maine's 131st Legislature

1. Historic funding and new tools for affordable housing production across Maine:

- \$35m allocated to the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program at MaineHousing
- \$35m allocated to leverage federal Low Income Housing Tax Credits at MaineHousing
- Revision to state Growth Management Law to allow for affordable rental housing production in more rural areas of Maine (LD 724)
- Revision to Tax Increment Financing law, allowing municipalities to extend existing TIFs for an additional 20 years if used for affordable housing or transportation investments (LD 1739)

2. Nation-leading Housing First initiative to end chronic homelessness in Maine:

- Creates new mechanism to fund on-site, 24/7 services at permanent supportive housing properties for those experiencing chronic homelessness, to be built throughout the state
- Funding sufficient to grow stock of site-based Housing First units from 85 to approximately 500 statewide
- Funds will fill gap in needed resources after federal supports are fully leveraged
- Until these new Housing First projects are built and ready to provide services, funding will be used to help finance their construction costs

3. Over \$20m in emergency housing and shelter supports:

- \$12m allocated to MaineHousing's Emergency Housing Relief Fund, to provide shelter, transitional housing and critical support services for more than 1,000 Maine people
- \$5m allocated to Maine's Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program, to support nearly three dozen homeless shelters across the state. \$257,000

was separately allocated through LD 1844 for grants to shelters for acquisition, construction and renovation costs

- Establishes a 2-year, \$3m pilot program at the Department of Education to help students avoid homelessness by providing McKinney-Vento liaisons with access to emergency financial assistance for the families of students, in an amount up to \$750 per student.
- \$1.5m allocated for the development of recovery homes in rural parts of the state that will help parents to reunify with their children (LD 1116)

4. New zoning and land use initiatives to support increased housing opportunities for Maine people:

- Updates Maine's groundbreaking zoning reform law, approved as LD 2003 last year, to (1) allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on nonconforming lots so long as they do not increase the nonconformity; (2) apply the law's provisions to areas where residential housing is permitted as a conditional use; (3) allow ADUs that were built without municipal approval, if they otherwise meet state and municipal requirements; and (4) make several other clarifications to the law to aid local implementation. Also extends the local implementation date of LD 2003 by 12 months for municipalities with a town meeting form of government, and 6 months for all others. (LD 1706)



Workers at the Snow School project in Fryeburg constructing 28 affordable homes for older Mainers. Earlier this year, Governor Mills and the Legislature approved \$70 million in additional funding to build similar affordable housing units across the state. (Photo credit: Avesta Housing)



Above, partners celebrate the 2017 opening of Huston Commons in Portland – the last Housing First project to be completed in Maine. “No ifs, ands, or buts about it,” says a tenant who went from homelessness to the stability of a safe, permanent home at Huston Commons. “We need more places like this. Outside is no place to live.” Housing First has proven to be a highly effective approach to addressing chronic homelessness, which is why the Governor and Legislature worked together to pass a nation-leading initiative to bring Housing First to scale statewide. (Photo credits: Avesta Housing, Preble Street)

- Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future directed to convene stakeholders and develop model policy to encourage the development of accessory dwelling units in Maine. Findings and recommendations to be submitted to the Legislature’s Joint Select Committee on Housing by March 1, 2024, and the Committee is authorized to submit relevant legislation in the 2024 session. (LD 654)

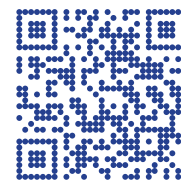
5. Tenant Supports and Protections:

- Landlords prohibited from charging fees to applicants beyond the actual amount the landlord is charged for credit or background checks or similar screening processes it undertakes. Landlords must also provide prospective tenants with a copy of all information received through such screening mechanisms. (LD 691)
- Increases from 45 to 75 the number of days’ written notice that a landlord must provide to a tenant if the landlord is increasing the rent by more than 10% in any 12-month period. (LD 701)
- Landlords required to attach to notice of termination of tenancy the notice of information and resources already required to be included with an eviction complaint. Also requires court to announce availability of tenant attorneys at start of eviction hearings, if such attorneys are indeed present. (LD 330)
- 2-year pilot established at MaineHousing to facilitate voluntary rent payment history reporting to credit agencies, to improve the credit ratings of tenants living in affordable rental housing. (LD 1107)

- 2-year pilot established at MaineHousing to develop a home share pilot program, to match older persons who own homes with spare rooms to adults in need of affordable housing. (LD 709)
- Residents of mobile home parks must be provided with notice and an opportunity for good faith negotiations to purchase the park, prior to its being sold to another party. (LD 1931)

6. Miscellaneous:

- Significant strengthening of Maine’s housing preservation statute; requires owners of rent-restricted or financially assisted affordable housing properties to provide MaineHousing and any local housing authority with notice of intent to sell and an option to purchase the property. (LD 724)
- \$300,000 allocated through LD 470 for the abatement of lead paint hazards in residential housing
- \$2m allocated for the capital costs of a food security hub to provide 10,000 hot meals each day for people experiencing homelessness or food insecurity statewide



For more information, visit:
maine.gov/future/housing