

Cabinet on Aging Meeting Minutes

December 1, 2023, 3-4 PM (by Zoom)

Commissioner Lambrew welcomed Cabinet members and recognized Cabinet staff in attendance. Before starting the agenda, the Commissioners spoke about the tragic events in Lewiston and the short and long-term impacts on family, friends, the community, and the State. The Commissioners expressed appreciation for the on-going work of all the agencies and organizations and the importance of these community partnerships. To help support and connect people to services, the Maine Resiliency Center has been established in Lewiston, which is operated by Community Concepts with support of state and federal agencies.

Supporting Caregiver Needs

James Moorehead, the Healthy Aging Services Manager with the Office of Aging and Disability Services, presented on the Respite for ME pilot program and provided an overview of the first-year evaluation findings. Respite for ME was launched statewide in the fall of 2022, administered through Maine's five Area Agencies on Aging. Funded by the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan, the first year of the pilot provided \$2,000 grants to family caregivers for respite care as well as other services not currently covered by existing programs, including self-care activities for the caregiver. As of October 2023, the benefit amount increased to \$5,171. The pilot is scheduled to end September 2024.

The evaluation was completed by the Catherine Cutler Institute and findings are summarized in the PowerPoint accompanying these minutes. James noted that the pilot was implemented at the same time as implementation of an evidence-based caregiver assessment system known as T-Care™. T-Care™ helps identify caregivers at risk for burnout, connect them to the right services, and helps to measure the impact of services.

Housing Needs

Director Brennan provided several updates on housing related issues. This included a presentation on the newly released "Maine Housing Production Needs Study." This study was conducted by HR & A Advisors and represents a collaborative effort among MaineHousing, the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, and the Department of Economic and Community Development. The Study analyzes the relationship between housing production and population and economic growth and key findings are summarized in the PowerPoint accompanying these meeting minutes. Based on historic underproduction and future needs (through 2030), Maine would need to add 8,400 to 9,200 homes each year, with needs varying by region.

Other housing updates included:

- A report was released November 2023 in response to LD 654, which directed the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future to study ways to encourage development of ADUs. Recommendations focused on financing and pre-approved design possibilities.

- LD 709 directed the MaineHousing to develop a home share pilot program for older persons. Home sharing programs help match homeowners with extra space to individuals needing a place to live. Typically, a person offers a private bedroom and shared common area in exchange for rent, help around the house or a combination of the two. Director Brennan reported that MaineHousing had issued a request for proposal (RFP), which closed November 20, 2023, with one bidder responding. Work is proceeding to implement 2024.

Other Cabinet Updates:

- Data for the statewide needs assessment discussed at the October 2023 meeting has been completed. A full report of findings will be available in January 2024.
- A training for state employees on ageism and age bias was postponed from the fall of 2024 and is now scheduled for late January. Cabinet members will help get the word out to agency staff.

Next Meeting: Monday, February 5, 2024, from 2-3 PM