

# DHHS FY 16/17 Budget Initiative: Additional Funding for BRAP

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## Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP)

The BRAP voucher program is a core service area of the Bates v. DHHS Consent Decree (i.e., “The AMHI Consent Decree”) that requires the Department to submit a funding request to address the unmet needs of people with severe and persistent mental illness, including class members at Riverview Psychiatric Center. BRAP is a transitional, short term rental subsidy program designed to assist people with psychiatric disabilities with housing assistance until they are independent or receive a Housing Choice Voucher, or identify an alternative housing placement.

## Initiative

This initiative provides funding to meet legal requirements of the Bates v. DHHS Consent Decree. It funds identified unmet needs in a separate account for the purposes of rental assistance (paired with MaineCare services) for individuals in order to comply with the terms of the Settlement Agreement. This cost effective and successful program supports an individual living independently in the community instead of higher cost institutional living options, such as hospitals and residential treatment facilities.

The Department has proposed and advocated for a \$5.8 million Consent Decree budget, plus an additional \$1.2 million for BRAP funding each fiscal year of the biennium. The Department will continue to monitor the needs of people with serious and persistent mental illness in the coming biennium and, as required by the Consent Decree, will continue to advocate for funding necessary to meet Consent Decree obligations.

Year	BRAP Baseline budget	BRAP Funds (additional request)
SFY 16	\$5,372,414	\$1,233,947
SFY 17	\$5,372,414	\$1,233,947

## Impact

- **Individuals:** The requested funding provides needed vouchers for those individuals who have a serious and persistent mental illness. The vouchers are allocated with the following priorities:
  1. Those leaving psychiatric hospital beds;
  2. Those who are literally homeless;
  3. Those living in substandard conditions; and
  4. Those leaving DHHS Residential Treatment Facilities.
- **Providers:** The funding allows providers to serve those individuals who have a serious and persistent mental illness who meet criteria for Mental Health services funded through MaineCare.
- **Spending Priorities for SFY 16/17:** The additional funding requested will eliminate the existing waitlist and allow for a rapid turn-around time to award vouchers to people waiting for discharge from psychiatric hospital beds. This cost effective program is demonstrated when comparing the current cost of a psychiatric hospital stay at more than \$1,000 per day to the average annual cost of a BRAP voucher which is \$5,800 per year—the annual cost of a BRAP voucher is less than the cost of remaining in a psychiatric hospital for 1 week.