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## Executive Summary

### AP-05 Executive Summary - 24 CFR 91.200(c), 91.220(b)

#### 1. Introduction

The State of Maine receives block grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to help address housing and community development needs. These grant funds include: the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) and the Housing Trust Fund (HTF).

The Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) will administer the CDBG program. Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing) will administer the HOME, HTF and ESG programs.

HUD requires that Maine complete a five year strategic plan called a Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development (Consolidated Plan). The Consolidated Plan identifies the State's housing and community development needs and specifies how block grant funds will be used to address those needs.

This document, the 2024 Maine Annual Action Plan, is the fifth Action Plan in the Consolidated Plan cycle. It describes how DECD and MaineHousing plan to allocate HUD block grant funds during the 2023 program year, which runs from January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

MaineHousing and the DECD look forward to continued coordination of programs and will involve other partners to leverage resources.

#### 2. Summarize the objectives and outcomes identified in the Plan

This could be a restatement of items or a table listed elsewhere in the plan or a reference to another location. It may also contain any essential items from the housing and homeless needs assessment, the housing market analysis or the strategic plan.

The three overarching objectives guiding proposed activities within this plan are to:

- Provide decent affordable housing
- Create suitable living environments
- Create economic opportunities

Programs and activities are designed to benefit a community or the people served. The benefits, or program outcomes, for each activity funded by the four federal programs are expected to be:

- Improved availability/accessibility
- Improved affordability

- Improved sustainability

All future activities funded in 2024 will support at least one objective and one outcome. The framework for realizing these objectives and outcomes include the following priorities:

- Improve and Preserve the Quality of Housing
- Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities
- Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability
- Improve Economic Opportunity
- Improve Public Infrastructure

To achieve these goals, the State will use a combination of federal and state funds and other public and private funds to address priority housing and community development needs.

In 2024, the State proposes to allocate funding to the following activities.

CDBG:

- See attached CDBG Program Statement

HOME:

- \$2.1 million for rental housing
- \$1.4 million for tenant based rental assistance

ESG:

- \$643,708.89 for emergency shelter operations and essential services
- \$643,708.89 for rapid rehousing

HTF:

- \$2,830,349.70 million for rental housing

This funding will result in

- sheltering 5,000 homeless individuals
- rental assistance for 135 homeless individuals
- 105 new or rehabilitated multifamily housing units
- 50 homeowner houses rehabbed
- 1000 persons assisted by a public facility or infrastructure activity
- 50 jobs created or retained
- 125 businesses assisted

### **3. Evaluation of past performance**

This is an evaluation of past performance that helped lead the grantee to choose its goals or projects.

The State's evaluation of its past performance has been completed in a thorough Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). This document states the objectives and expected outcomes identified in the Consolidated Plan and includes an evaluation of past performance compared to measurable goals and objectives. The CAPER can be found on the MaineHousing website.

It is important to note that the State of Maine provides affordable housing and community development through a variety of assistance programs, many of which are funded through agency resources or state appropriations. In 2022 MaineHousing assisted more than 900 First Time Home Buyers, an average of 3,625 monthly voucher households, 235 homeowners (not including over 27,500 helped with energy assistance) and more than 5,600 homeless individuals.

MaineHousing used funds to complete 9 multifamily projects, for a total of 244 units (128 for families, 86 for older adults and 30 supportive housing). In 2022, 25 projects were under construction (302 family units, 743 units for older adults and 10 supportive housing units).

### **4. Summary of Citizen Participation Process and consultation process**

Summary from citizen participation section of plan.

MaineHousing and DECD followed the State's Citizen Participation Plan and reached out to local, regional and state organizations, the Continuum of Care (CoC) and other interested parties. A hybrid public consultation opportunity occurred on September 8, 2023. This hearing was accessible both remotely and in person. The combined forum and public hearing was broadly advertised and was attended by seven people. The topic of the forum was the allocation of 2024 CDBG, HOME, HTF and ESG funds, and the meeting was held prior to the drafting of the 2024 Annual Action Plan.

Public hearing notice of the virtual hearing was placed on both the DECD and MaineHousing websites, and stakeholder groups were notified of the forum via email. The MaineHousing email list includes community leaders, developers, CHDOs, local housing authorities, advocacy groups, not-for-profit organizations, providers of housing and services to the homeless, CoC members, and interested individuals. The virtual forum/hearing was also announced via social media with postings on the MaineHousing social media sites.

On December 11, 2023 a second virtual public hearing was held to gather comments on the draft 2024 Annual Action Plan. The public hearing was broadly advertised and was attended by five people. No public comments were offered at the public hearing. One written public comment was submitted during the public comment period.

### **5. Summary of public comments**

This could be a brief narrative summary or reference an attached document from the Citizen Participation section of the Con Plan.

See Attached Public Comment with written response.

**6. Summary of comments or views not accepted and the reasons for not accepting them**

N/A

**7. Summary**

The Maine Department of Economic and Community Development and MaineHousing will be partner agencies for the 2024 Annual Action Plan.

All activities funded in 2024 will address one of the following goals:

- Improve Housing Quality
- Expand the Supply of Affordable Housing
- Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability
- Improve Economic Opportunity
- Improve Public Infrastructure

MaineHousing and DECD followed the State's Citizen Participation Plan for public consultation in the preparation of this Plan.

The format of this Plan is mandated by HUD. HUD has provided an online template for grantees as part of its planning and reporting system called IDIS. The questions in bold and many of the tables are created automatically by IDIS. After the Plan is approved by HUD, results of plan goals will be reported each year in the Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER), another on-line document which will be produced in IDIS.





allocation of program resources, development of common assessment tools, performance measurement, and HMIS are discussed at the monthly meetings. The MCoC has also designated MaineHousing as the Management Entity for the statewide Coordinated Entry System. To that end, MaineHousing and MCoC have worked together, along with other stakeholders, to design and implement a coordinated system of service delivery and housing resources. MaineHousing, the MCoC, the Statewide Homeless Council, and the Homeless Service Hubs across Maine are also working to gather comprehensive data to compile a By Name List of all people experiencing chronic homelessness in Maine, with the objective of reducing chronic homelessness statewide.

**Describe consultation with the Continuum(s) of Care that serves the State in determining how to allocate ESG funds, develop performance standards for and evaluate outcomes of projects and activities assisted by ESG funds, and develop funding, policies and procedures for the operation and administration of HMIS**

Allocation of ESG for the State of Maine is detailed in the Homeless Solutions Rule which is posted on the MaineHousing website (<https://www.mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/msha-rules/19--homeless-solutions-rule.pdf>). In 2022, MaineHousing, in collaboration with partners, revised the rule, and in 2023, solicited feedback on how the new rule was working in practice. Feedback received was positive and the rule will be kept consistent in 2024. MaineHousing also brought forward its plans for keeping the rule consistent in 2024 to the CoC for input. The CoC was in agreement with MaineHousing's plans for allocating ESG funds as well as the standards and outcomes outlined in the rule. Additionally, the criteria for receiving ESG funding requires that applicants be regular and active participants of the MCoC. This requirement helps ensure that the ESG awardees have a venue to regularly provide feedback to MaineHousing.

**Performance Standards and Evaluation:**

MaineHousing and the MCoC, through the Homeless Solutions Rule, have developed performance standards. Shelter funding is directly tied to successfully meeting the standards. The performance standards are evaluated regularly by the MCoC

**Policies and Procedures for HMIS:**

In collaboration with the MCoC, all HMIS Policies and Procedures and Governance Documents are reviewed annually and updated as needed based on this review.

The HMIS Policies and Procedures underwent a full revision in 2022 in collaboration with the CoC and are undergoing a review and revision in 2023.

**2. Agencies, groups, organizations and others who participated in the process and consultations**





	<p><b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b></p>	<p>The Statewide Homeless Council meets regularly to discuss needs and issues. MaineHousing solicited their input on the allocation of funding. They are notified of plan development, public hearings and comment periods. The Statewide Homeless Council also worked with MaineHousing and outside consultants to develop regional collaborative Service Hubs, which foster coordination on a local level throughout the state of Maine.</p>
4	<p><b>Agency/Group/Organization</b></p>	<p>Maine Continuum of Care</p>
	<p><b>Agency/Group/Organization Type</b></p>	<p>Housing  Services - Housing  Services-Children  Services-Elderly Persons  Services-Persons with Disabilities  Services-Persons with HIV/AIDS  Services-Victims of Domestic Violence  Services-homeless  Services-Health  Services-Education  Services-Employment  Service-Fair Housing  Services - Victims  Health Agency  Child Welfare Agency  Publicly Funded Institution/System of Care  Other government - State  Other government - Local</p>
	<p><b>What section of the Plan was addressed by Consultation?</b></p>	<p>Homeless Needs - Chronically homeless  Homeless Needs - Families with children  Homelessness Needs - Veterans  Homelessness Needs - Unaccompanied youth  Homelessness Strategy</p>

<p><b>Briefly describe how the Agency/Group/Organization was consulted. What are the anticipated outcomes of the consultation or areas for improved coordination?</b></p>	<p>The Maine Continuum of Care meets regularly to discuss needs and issues. MaineHousing solicited input on the allocation of funding. The Continuum of Care is notified of plan development, public hearings and comment periods.</p>
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**Identify any Agency Types not consulted and provide rationale for not consulting**

Not Applicable; all agencies and stakeholders were welcome to participate.

**Other local/regional/state/federal planning efforts considered when preparing the Plan**

Name of Plan	Lead Organization	How do the goals of your Strategic Plan overlap with the goals of each plan?
Continuum of Care	MaineHousing	The Continuum of Care goals have been recognized in the 2020 Consolidated Plan and the subsequent 2024 Annual Action Plan.
Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice	MaineHousing	The Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice was updated in conjunction with the 2020 Consolidated Plan to identify impediments to fair housing choice and actions to address those impediments.
Qualified Allocation Plan	MaineHousing	The Qualified Allocation Plan recognizes the needs and priorities identified in the 2020 Consolidated Plan.

**Table 3 - Other local / regional / federal planning efforts**

**Narrative**

**AP-12 Participation - 91.115, 91.300(c)**

**1. Summary of citizen participation process/Efforts made to broaden citizen participation  
Summarize citizen participation process and how it impacted goal-setting**

MaineHousing and DECD followed the State's Citizen Participation Plan and reached out to local, regional and state organizations, the Continuum of Care (CoC) and other interested parties. A hybrid public consultation opportunity occurred on September 8, 2023. This hearing was accessible both remotely and in person. The combined forum and public hearing was broadly advertised and was attended by seven people. The topic of the forum was the allocation of 2024 CDBG, HOME, HTF and ESG funds, and the meeting was held prior to the drafting of the 2024 Annual Action Plan.

Public hearing notice of the virtual hearing was placed on both the DECD and MaineHousing websites, and stakeholder groups were notified of the forum via email. The MaineHousing email list includes community leaders, developers, CHDOs, local housing authorities, advocacy groups, not-for-profit organizations, providers of housing and services to the homeless, CoC members, and interested individuals. The virtual forum/hearing was also announced via social media with postings on the MaineHousing social media sites.

**Citizen Participation Outreach**

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
1	Public Hearing	Non-targeted/broad community	The 9/8/23 hybrid hearing was attended by 7 people.	No public comments were offered.		

Sort Order	Mode of Outreach	Target of Outreach	Summary of response/attendance	Summary of comments received	Summary of comments not accepted and reasons	URL (If applicable)
2	Newspaper Ad	Non-targeted/broad community	Notice of the 9/8/23 public hearing was published on 08/24/23 in the Bangor Daily News, the Portland Press Herald, the Lewiston Sun Journal and the Kennebec Journal.			
3	Public Hearing	Non-targeted/broad community	The 12/11/23 hybrid hearing was attended by 5 people.	No public comments were offered.		
5	Newspaper Ad	Non-targeted/broad community	Notice of the 12/11/23 public hearing was published on 11/24/23 in the Bangor Daily News, the Portland Press Herald, the Lewiston Sun Journal and the Kennebec Journal.	No public comments were offered.		

**Table 4 – Citizen Participation Outreach**

**Expected Resources**

**AP-15 Expected Resources – 91.320(c)(1,2)**  
**Introduction**

**Anticipated Resources**

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan \$	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
CDBG	public - federal	Acquisition Admin and Planning Economic Development Housing Public Improvements Public Services	11,808,636	0	0	11,808,636	11,808,636	DECD through its annual Method of Distribution allocates funds these eligible categories. UGLG then apply based on their community needs.

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan \$	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
HOME	public - federal	Acquisition Homebuyer assistance Homeowner rehab Multifamily rental new construction Multifamily rental rehab New construction for ownership TBRA	3,893,165	8,803	0	3,901,968	3,901,968	MaineHousing allocates HOME funds to new construction, rehabilitation, and financing of multi-family rental projects, as well as to TBRA.
ESG	public - federal	Conversion and rehab for transitional housing Financial Assistance Overnight shelter Rapid re-housing (rental assistance) Rental Assistance Services Transitional housing	1,391,803	0	0	1,391,803	1,391,803	MaineHousing provides grants to emergency shelters serving people who are homeless. Grants may be used for shelter operations, essential services, rapid re-housing, and HMIS data collection costs.

Program	Source of Funds	Uses of Funds	Expected Amount Available Year 1				Expected Amount Available Remainder of ConPlan \$	Narrative Description
			Annual Allocation: \$	Program Income: \$	Prior Year Resources: \$	Total: \$		
HTF	public - federal	Acquisition Admin and Planning Homebuyer assistance Multifamily rental new construction Multifamily rental rehab New construction for ownership	3,144,833	0	0	3,144,833	3,144,833	MaineHousing allocates HTF funds to new construction, rehabilitation, and financing of multi-family rental projects.

**Table 5 - Expected Resources – Priority Table**

**Explain how federal funds will leverage those additional resources (private, state and local funds), including a description of how matching requirements will be satisfied**

The ESG 100% match requirement will be met with State HOME funds and the Shelter Operating Subsidy. HOME 25% match requirement will be met with State funding for housing stabilization and relocation services, as well as interest savings on below market rate loans.

**If appropriate, describe publically owned land or property located within the jurisdiction that may be used to address the needs identified in the plan**

Not Applicable

**Discussion**

**Annual Goals and Objectives**

**AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives – 91.320(c)(3)&(e)**

**Goals Summary Information**

<b>Sort Order</b>	<b>Goal Name</b>	<b>Start Year</b>	<b>End Year</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Geographic Area</b>	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Goal Outcome Indicator</b>
1	Provide Rapid Re-Housing	2020	2024	Homeless	State Of Maine	Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability	HOME: \$1,400,000 ESG: \$643,709	Tenant-based rental assistance / Rapid Rehousing: 3500 Households Assisted
2	Support Emergency Shelter Operations & Services	2020	2024	Homeless	State Of Maine	Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability	ESG: \$643,708	Homeless Person Overnight Shelter: 5000 Persons Assisted
3	Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities	2020	2024	Affordable Housing	State Of Maine	Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities	HOME: \$2,103,849 HTF: \$2,830,350	Rental units constructed: 95 Household Housing Unit Rental units rehabilitated: 10 Household Housing Unit
4	Improve and Preserve the Quality of Housing	2020	2024	Affordable Housing	State Of Maine	Improve and Preserve the Quality of Housing	CDBG: \$4,000,000	Rental units rehabilitated: 100 Household Housing Unit Homeowner Housing Rehabilitated: 100 Household Housing Unit
5	Improve Public Infrastructure	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	State Of Maine	Improve Public Infrastructure	CDBG: \$2,800,000	Public Facility or Infrastructure Activities other than Low/Moderate Income Housing Benefit: 1000 Persons Assisted
6	Improve Economic Opportunity	2020	2024	Non-Housing Community Development	State Of Maine	Improve Economic Opportunity	CDBG: \$3,000,000	Jobs created/retained: 50 Jobs Businesses assisted: 125 Businesses Assisted

**Table 6 – Goals Summary**

## Goal Descriptions

1	<b>Goal Name</b>	Provide Rapid Re-Housing
	<b>Goal Description</b>	<p>MaineHousing's Homeless Solutions Rule states that all grantees must provide services based upon Rapid Re-Housing and Housing First tenets. Grantees receive access to a variety of set-aside short, medium, and long-term Rapid Re-housing vouchers to assist them in achieving this goal. Shelters are given training on Rapid Re-Housing and Housing First principals and are required to have a Housing Navigator at each grantee recipient location with a working knowledge of these concepts. They are provided with a resource guide on administering navigation services, have access to recorded trainings, and attend an annual, in person training on housing first and related topics. They have the ability to assist people experiencing homelessness in accessing the set-aside of housing resources as well as other appropriate housing resources. Grantees utilize the Maine Navigator Services Eligibility Assessment (Maine NavSEA) to determine eligibility for Rapid Rehousing services, and provide those services to eligible households who opt for them.</p>
2	<b>Goal Name</b>	Support Emergency Shelter Operations & Services
	<b>Goal Description</b>	<p>The current funding formula allocates 50 percent of the total ESG funding for Shelter Operations, to be disbursed to the eligible ESHAP shelters in Maine based on their Bed Capacity. “Bed Capacity” is defined as the maximum number of beds in an Emergency Shelter as indicated on an annual application for funding; however, the Bed Capacity of a Low Barrier Shelter (as indicated on the annual application) is multiplied by 125%. This multiplier is to support the higher utilization of Low Barrier Shelters and encourage all ESHAP shelters to move toward Low Barrier models where feasible. Each Emergency Shelter receives a percentage equal to the Emergency Shelter’s Bed Capacity divided by total Bed Capacity available statewide for the calendar year.</p>

3	<b>Goal Name</b>	Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities
	<b>Goal Description</b>	<p>The <b>Rental Loan Program</b> (RLP) provides long-term mortgage financing at attractive interest rates for development of affordable rental housing in projects of five or more units.</p> <p>Program objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximize use of tax exempt bonds to develop affordable housing.</li> <li>• Provide affordable mortgage financing that enables developers to utilize low income housing tax credits.</li> <li>• Provide below-market, 30 year fixed rate notes that enable project viability.</li> <li>• Provide capital for preservation of existing rental housing.</li> </ul> <p>This program is a companion to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program, and provides subsidized financing to enable use of tax credits. Administrative guidance for the Rental Loan Program is provided through the Rental Loan Program Guide, which is available at <a href="http://www.mainehousing.org">www.mainehousing.org</a>. Administrative guidance for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program is provided through a rule making process which is required to establish the Allocation of State Ceiling for Low Income Housing Tax Credit.</p> <p>Additional program funds come from the Housing Trust Fund, which will also be used to produce, preserve, acquire and/or rehabilitate rental housing for extremely low income households.</p>
4	<b>Goal Name</b>	Improve and Preserve the Quality of Housing
	<b>Goal Description</b>	CDBG funds will be used to preserve and improve 100 units of rental housing and 100 units of single family
5	<b>Goal Name</b>	Improve Public Infrastructure
	<b>Goal Description</b>	
6	<b>Goal Name</b>	Improve Economic Opportunity
	<b>Goal Description</b>	

**AP-25 Allocation Priorities – 91.320(d)**

**Introduction:**

MaineHousing anticipates using funds as follows:

Rental Housing: \$ 2.1 million HOME and \$2.8 million HTF -- The Rental Loan Program

Rental Assistance: \$1.4 million 2024 HOME - Stability Through Engagement Program (TBRA)

Emergency homeless shelter operations & essential services (ESHAP): \$644,864 ESG

Rapid Rehousing (ESHAP): \$644,864 ESG

Percentages in the table below do not include the administrative set-aside.

CDBG priorities are Housing, Infrastructure and Economic Development

**Funding Allocation Priorities**

	<b>Provide Rapid Re-Housing (%)</b>	<b>Support Emergency Shelter Operations &amp; Services (%)</b>	<b>Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities (%)</b>	<b>Improve and Preserve the Quality of Housing (%)</b>	<b>Improve Public Infrastructure (%)</b>	<b>Improve Economic Opportunity (%)</b>	<b>Total (%)</b>
CDBG	0	0	0	40	30	30	<b>100</b>
HOME	39	0	61	0	0	0	<b>100</b>
ESG	50	50	0	0	0	0	<b>100</b>
HTF	0	0	100	0	0	0	<b>100</b>

**Table 7 – Funding Allocation Priorities**

**Reason for Allocation Priorities**

The funding listed above is reflective of program history and public input. Allocation amounts are based on demand and capacity of the agencies.

MaineHousing and DECD strive to use federal funds efficiently and effectively by combining them with other available resources that will serve as matching funds.

**How will the proposed distribution of funds will address the priority needs and specific objectives described in the Consolidated Plan?**

The proposed 2024 funding allocations address the priorities and goals outlined in the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The distribution of funds will follow the priorities set forth in the Consolidated Plan:

- Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities
- Provide Rapid Re-Housing
- Support Emergency Shelter Operations & Services
- Improve and Preserve the Quality of Housing
- Improve Public Infrastructure
- Improve Economic Opportunity

**AP-30 Methods of Distribution – 91.320(d)&(k)**

**Introduction:**

HOME, HTF, ESG and CDBG funding is open to all eligible applicants. The Rental Loan Program Guide, the CDBG Program Statement, the Homeless Program Rule, the ESHAP Program Guide, the STEP Program Guide, and the Consolidated Plan outline the respective programs.

**Distribution Methods**

**Table 8 - Distribution Methods by State Program**

<b>1</b>	<b>State Program Name:</b>	CDBG Program
	<b>Funding Sources:</b>	CDBG
	<b>Describe the state program addressed by the Method of Distribution.</b>	see attached CDBG Program Statement
	<b>Describe all of the criteria that will be used to select applications and the relative importance of these criteria.</b>	see attached CDBG Program Statement
	<b>If only summary criteria were described, how can potential applicants access application manuals or other state publications describing the application criteria? (CDBG only)</b>	see attached CDBG Program Statement

<p><b>Describe the process for awarding funds to state recipients and how the state will make its allocation available to units of general local government, and non-profit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations. (ESG only)</b></p>	<p>see attached CDBG Program Statement</p>
<p><b>Identify the method of selecting project sponsors (including providing full access to grassroots faith-based and other community-based organizations). (HOPWA only)</b></p>	
<p><b>Describe how resources will be allocated among funding categories.</b></p>	<p>see attached CDBG Program Statement</p>
<p><b>Describe threshold factors and grant size limits.</b></p>	<p>see attached CDBG Program Statement</p>

	<b>What are the outcome measures expected as a result of the method of distribution?</b>	see AP 20 CDBG goals and objectives
2	<b>State Program Name:</b>	Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP)
	<b>Funding Sources:</b>	ESG
	<b>Describe the state program addressed by the Method of Distribution.</b>	In consultation with the MCoC and in partnership with Emergency Shelters and Homeless Service Providers throughout the state, MaineHousing offers the ESHAP Program as an annual Grantee process to assist individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness. The funding formula allocation is detailed in the Homeless Solutions Rule and the ESG Written Standards.

<p><b>Describe all of the criteria that will be used to select applications and the relative importance of these criteria.</b></p>	<p>To be eligible to receive ESHAP funds an applicant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.</li> <li>• Be eligible in accordance with the HEARTH Act.</li> <li>• Be a provider of homeless services with at least one year of experience providing emergency housing, street outreach, homeless prevention or Rapid Re-Housing services.</li> <li>• Be a regular and active participant in the Maine Continuum of Care.</li> <li>• Be a regular and active participant in their local Homeless Service Hub by participating in Hub meetings and providing relevant data to the Hubs for the generation of a by-name list of Persons Experiencing Homelessness;</li> <li>• Have a board/advisory board that includes at least one person who is homeless or formerly homeless who is involved in policy or public planning of the organization.</li> <li>• Participate in the Coordinated Entry System.</li> <li>• Not engage in any explicitly religious activities, such as worship or religious instruction. If religious activities are offered, they must occur at a separate time or location from the activities and services covered in this rule.</li> <li>• Participate in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or a comparable database for victims of domestic violence and meet performance and reporting requirements.</li> </ul> <p>For a complete list of requirements, see the Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program Guide (attached )</p> <p>New applicants to the Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program will be selected based upon the current need for services in the applying agency’s catchment area. New applicants must show they are filling an unmet need for shelter and/or navigation services for people experiencing homelessness in order to be accepted into ESHAP. Returning applicants will be considered for renewal based on a risk assessment score obtained through monitoring. Shelters with high risk scores</p>
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	will be subjected to a community need assessment to determine if they will continue to receive funding.
<b>If only summary criteria were described, how can potential applicants access application manuals or other state publications describing the application criteria? (CDBG only)</b>	
<b>Describe the process for awarding funds to state recipients and how the state will make its allocation available to units of general local government, and non-profit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations. (ESG only)</b>	<p><b>Shelter Operations:</b> An amount equal to 45% of the Funding Formula Allocation will be disbursed among Emergency Shelters, such that each Emergency Shelter will receive a percentage equal to its Bed Capacity divided by a number equal to the total Bed Capacity available statewide for the calendar year. Agencies will receive scheduled payments on a quarterly basis.</p> <p><b>Rapid Rehousing (Housing Stabilization Share):</b> An amount equal to 45% of the Funding Formula Allocation will be disbursed among eligible agencies, such that each agency providing staffing for Rapid Re-housing, Housing First and Housing Stabilization services operated by the agency will be eligible to receive a percentage equal to the agency's total number of Clients Assessed and Stabilized, divided by the total number of Clients Assessed and Stabilized statewide. The number of Clients Assessed and Stabilized will be based upon the most recent four quarters of data available to MaineHousing at the start of the grant year. Agencies are reimbursed for costs on a quarterly basis.</p>
<b>Identify the method of selecting project sponsors (including providing full access to grassroots faith-based and other community-based organizations). (HOPWA only)</b>	

<p><b>Describe how resources will be allocated among funding categories.</b></p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p><b>Describe threshold factors and grant size limits.</b></p>	<p>Grants are based upon the threshold as described in the Maine Homeless Solutions Rule. MaineHousing uses up to 50 percent of ESG funding for emergency shelter operations as noted in the Operations Share description above and the remaining funds for the Stabilization Share also detailed</p>
<p><b>What are the outcome measures expected as a result of the method of distribution?</b></p>	<p>MaineHousing provided emergency shelter for 4,660 people and rapid rehousing services to 4,156 people in 2023. We anticipate serving approximately 5000 in shelter and 3500 with Rapid Re-housing services 2024. All shelters receiving funding will be tracked on performance benchmarks and will receive additional funding depending on their ability to meet these benchmarks.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>State Program Name:</b> Rental Loan Program</p>
<p><b>Funding Sources:</b></p>	<p>HOME HTF</p>

<p><b>Describe the state program addressed by the Method of Distribution.</b></p>	<p>The primary goal of the Rental Loan Program is to create and preserve affordable multi-family residential rental housing in the State of Maine.</p> <p>Preservation may include federally-assisted housing, such as HUD 202, HUD 811 and Rural Development 515 properties at risk of being lost due to the expiration of federal rental assistance contracts, physical or financial deterioration, and/or owners opting out of federal housing programs.</p> <p>To achieve the goals of this Program, MaineHousing will make various resources available in the form of amortizing loans, deferred payment loans and/or grants under this Program or in conjunction with the Program from time to time, including without limitation, the following resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• taxable bond proceeds;</li> <li>• private activity tax-exempt bonds;</li> <li>• 501(c)(3) or governmental unit tax-exempt bond proceeds; and</li> <li>• subsidy resources.</li> </ul> <p>These resources are usually combined with equity generated from the syndication of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) and/or Maine’s Affordable Housing Tax Credits. Competitive credits and “automatic” credits are awarded in accordance with Maine’s Qualified Allocation Plan.</p> <p>Additional program funds come from the Housing Trust Fund, which will also be used to produce, preserve, acquire and/or rehabilitate rental housing for extremely low income households. Applicants for state or federal tax credits who commit to providing units for individuals with specific housing needs may receive HTF funds for those dedicated units.</p> <p>MaineHousing attempts to maximize the benefit of these limited resources by combining the resources and encouraging applicants to seek other non-MaineHousing resources.</p> <p>Amortizing loans, funded with the proceeds of taxable or tax-exempt bond proceeds, for developments that do not need MaineHousing subsidy are available typically on a walk-in basis.</p> <p>MaineHousing allocates competitive low income housing tax credits separately under MaineHousing’s Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program. All applicants who are awarded low income housing tax</p>
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	<p>credits on a competitive basis or are eligible for “automatic” low income housing tax credits must comply with the applicable Qualified Allocation Plan.</p> <p>MaineHousing may make various additional discretionary subsidy resources available from time to time.</p>
<p><b>Describe all of the criteria that will be used to select applications and the relative importance of these criteria.</b></p>	<p>Qualified developers may apply. Applicants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide housing and services to vulnerable populations (for HTF units)</li> <li>• Demonstrate ability to undertake required eligible development activities and obligate funds in a timely manner</li> <li>• Demonstrate their ability to make use of additional funding sources</li> <li>• Have a satisfactory credit history and demonstrate adequate financial capacity to own and operate the housing, including the use of any available rental assistance funding.</li> <li>• Have control of the development site.</li> <li>• Demonstrate they will provide the required number of lower income units.</li> <li>• Prioritize underserved areas.</li> <li>• Meet the State’s housing priority needs as described in the Consolidated Plan: Improve and Preserve the Quality of Housing, Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities, and/or Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the management agent for the housing must demonstrate successful experience in managing similar properties.</p> <p>MaineHousing generally selects those developments that will provide the greatest amount of long term, low-income housing at the least cost of taxpayer subsidy dollars.</p>

<p><b>If only summary criteria were described, how can potential applicants access application manuals or other state publications describing the application criteria? (CDBG only)</b></p>	
<p><b>Describe the process for awarding funds to state recipients and how the state will make its allocation available to units of general local government, and non-profit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations. (ESG only)</b></p>	
<p><b>Identify the method of selecting project sponsors (including providing full access to grassroots faith-based and other community-based organizations). (HOPWA only)</b></p>	
<p><b>Describe how resources will be allocated among funding categories.</b></p>	<p>HOME and HTF funds allocated to the Rental Loan Program are expected to be used for the construction, acquisition and rehabilitation, and rehabilitation of qualified residential rental projects.</p> <p>HTF units must be provided to individuals with specific housing needs and incomes at or below 30% of Area Median Income (AMI). The estimated FY 2024 HTF Allocation Amount is \$3,144,833 of that \$2,830,349 is for direct investment in unit production. HUD regulations allow MaineHousing to use up to ten percent (\$314,483) of the state allocation for reasonable costs to administer the HTF.</p>

<p><b>Describe threshold factors and grant size limits.</b></p>	<p>A. Combination of Available Resources MaineHousing attempts to maximize the impact of the limited resources it has available by combining resources and encouraging applicants to seek other non-MaineHousing sources of funding.</p> <p>B. Tax-exempt Bond Financing MaineHousing may issue tax-exempt bonds under Section 142(d) or Section 145 of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) as a source of funding under the Program. The Code imposes certain requirements and limitations on the use of tax-exempt bond proceeds. There may be additional requirements under the Program.</p> <p>C. Non Tax Exempt Proceeds Non tax exempt proceeds are used mostly in conjunction with an allocation of low income housing tax credits under the competitive Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program.</p> <p>D. Subsidy Resources Any project receiving subsidy is subject to the regulatory requirements associated with the subsidy resource.</p>
<p><b>What are the outcome measures expected as a result of the method of distribution?</b></p>	<p>MaineHousing expects to create or preserve 145 new rental units, 7 to 10 of which will be rental units serving extremely low income households using the HTF.</p>
<p><b>4 State Program Name:</b></p>	<p>Stability through Engagement Program (STEP) TBRA</p>
<p><b>Funding Sources:</b></p>	<p>HOME</p>

<p><b>Describe the state program addressed by the Method of Distribution.</b></p>	<p>STEP is designed to provide short- and medium-term rental assistance for up to 24 months to help individuals and families experiencing homelessness achieve housing stability. Referrals to the STEP Program can only be made by the Housing Navigators, and the Maine Coordinated Entry System (MCES) as the system develops.</p>
<p><b>Describe all of the criteria that will be used to select applications and the relative importance of these criteria.</b></p>	<p>Rapid Re-housing participants may be eligible to receive short- and medium-term rental assistance, for a maximum of 24 months, through STEP if they meet the following requirements (unless prohibited by VAWA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staying in a shelter or working with an ESHAP provider.</li> <li>• Enrolled and participating in ESHAP with an approved Housing Stability Plan.</li> <li>• Continued contact with their Housing Navigator to review progress no less than every 30 days.</li> <li>• Reassessment to evaluate if continued assistance is necessary at 12 months.</li> <li>• As referred to STEP from the MCES Prioritized List once the process is developed.</li> </ul> <p>See STEP Administrative Plan for detail (attached).</p>
<p><b>If only summary criteria were described, how can potential applicants access application manuals or other state publications describing the application criteria? (CDBG only)</b></p>	
<p><b>Describe the process for awarding funds to state recipients and how the state will make its allocation available to units of general local government, and non-profit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations. (ESG only)</b></p>	

<p><b>Identify the method of selecting project sponsors (including providing full access to grassroots faith-based and other community-based organizations). (HOPWA only)</b></p>	
<p><b>Describe how resources will be allocated among funding categories.</b></p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p><b>Describe threshold factors and grant size limits.</b></p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>

<b>What are the outcome measures expected as a result of the method of distribution?</b>	The goal for the STEP program is to administer 135 STEP coupons to rapidly re-house individuals and/or families experiencing homelessness and to keep 95% of them stably housed.
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**AP-35 Projects – (Optional)**

**Introduction:**

See the CDBG 2024 Program Statement

#	Project Name
1	ESG24 Maine
2	HOME24 TBRA
3	Rental Loan Program 24
4	HOME24 Admin
5	HTF24 Admin

**Table 9 – Project Information**

**Describe the reasons for allocation priorities and any obstacles to addressing underserved needs**

The allocation priorities are reflective of program history and public input. Allocation amounts are based on demand and capacity of the agencies.

MaineHousing and DECD strive to use federal funds efficiently and effectively by combining them with other available resources that will serve as matching funds.

AP-38 Project Summary

Project Summary Information

1	<b>Project Name</b>	ESG24 Maine
	<b>Target Area</b>	State Of Maine
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Provide Rapid Re-Housing Support Emergency Shelter Operations & Services
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability
	<b>Funding</b>	ESG: \$1,391,803
	<b>Description</b>	MaineHousing plans to use the 2024 allocation of ESG funds to provide grants to emergency shelters serving people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Grants may be used for shelter operations, Rapid Re-housing and HMIS data collection costs.
	<b>Target Date</b>	12/31/2024
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	MaineHousing anticipates serving 3,500 households with rapid rehousing funding and 5000 people with emergency shelter funding.
	<b>Location Description</b>	Statewide
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	Grants to emergency shelters
2	<b>Project Name</b>	HOME24 TBRA
	<b>Target Area</b>	State Of Maine
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Provide Rapid Re-Housing
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability
	<b>Funding</b>	HOME: \$1,400,000

	<b>Description</b>	STEP (TBRA) is designed to provide short and medium term rental assistance for up to 24 months to help individuals and families achieve housing stability. The focus is on rapidly re-housing people who are currently experiencing homelessness. Referrals to the STEP Program can only be made by Housing Navigators, and the Maine Coordinated Entry System (MCES) as the system develops.
	<b>Target Date</b>	12/31/2024
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	135 Households
	<b>Location Description</b>	Statewide
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	Short and Medium term rental assistance for 24 months
3	<b>Project Name</b>	Rental Loan Program 24
	<b>Target Area</b>	State Of Maine
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities
	<b>Funding</b>	HOME: \$2,103,849 HTF: \$2,830,349
	<b>Description</b>	The primary goal of the Rental Loan Program is to create and preserve affordable multi-family residential rental housing in the State of Maine. The HTF has been allocated entirely to this program. Eligible activities will include acquisition and/or rehabilitation of existing housing units, adaptive re-use of existing buildings, or new construction of rental housing units.
	<b>Target Date</b>	
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	The 2024 goal is 105 new multifamily units.

	<b>Location Description</b>	Statewide
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	New construction and acquisition/rehabilitation of multifamily housing
4	<b>Project Name</b>	HOME24 Admin
	<b>Target Area</b>	
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	
	<b>Funding</b>	HOME: \$389,317
	<b>Description</b>	HOME Admin and Program Income Admin
	<b>Target Date</b>	
	<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	
	<b>Location Description</b>	
	<b>Planned Activities</b>	
5	<b>Project Name</b>	HTF24 Admin
	<b>Target Area</b>	
	<b>Goals Supported</b>	
	<b>Needs Addressed</b>	
	<b>Funding</b>	HTF: \$314,483
	<b>Description</b>	HTF Admin
	<b>Target Date</b>	

<b>Estimate the number and type of families that will benefit from the proposed activities</b>	
<b>Location Description</b>	
<b>Planned Activities</b>	



**AP-40 Section 108 Loan Guarantee – 91.320(k)(1)(ii)**

**Will the state help non-entitlement units of general local government to apply for Section 108 loan funds?**

No

**Available Grant Amounts**

**Acceptance process of applications**

**AP-45 Community Revitalization Strategies – 91.320(k)(1)(ii)**

**Will the state allow units of general local government to carry out community revitalization strategies?**

No

**State's Process and Criteria for approving local government revitalization strategies**

**AP-50 Geographic Distribution – 91.320(f)**

**Description of the geographic areas of the state (including areas of low-income and minority concentration) where assistance will be directed**

The State of Maine does not prioritize the allocation of CDBG, HOME, HTF or ESG funds geographically. Income eligible citizens, eligible HTF recipients, and housing developers may apply for grants or loans from anywhere in Maine. Low Income Housing Tax credit priorities include projects in rural areas and Difficult to Develop Areas.

**Geographic Distribution**

<b>Target Area</b>	<b>Percentage of Funds</b>
State Of Maine	100

**Table 10 - Geographic Distribution**

**Rationale for the priorities for allocating investments geographically**

MaineHousing and DECD have chosen not to target particular geographical areas for special assistance.

**Discussion**

Please see above

## Affordable Housing

### AP-55 Affordable Housing – 24 CFR 91.320(g)

#### Introduction:

Affordable housing goals vary by program and the population to be served. Data in the following tables may overlap due to programs that assist both households as well as individuals.

The term affordable housing used in 24 CFR 92.252 and 92.254 includes several elements that are not requirements of ESG and CDBG. Therefore, only HOME and HTF units that receive federal assistance that can be assured of meeting the standard of "affordable housing" are described here.

<b>One Year Goals for the Number of Households to be Supported</b>	
Homeless	135
Non-Homeless	99
Special-Needs	6
Total	240

**Table 11 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Requirement**

<b>One Year Goals for the Number of Households Supported Through</b>	
Rental Assistance	135
The Production of New Units	95
Rehab of Existing Units	10
Acquisition of Existing Units	0
Total	240

**Table 12 - One Year Goals for Affordable Housing by Support Type**

#### Discussion:

The goals listed above are in relation to HOME and HTF funding only. Additional households will be assisted with other programs offered by MaineHousing and DECD.

## **AP-60 Public Housing - 24 CFR 91.320(j)**

### **Introduction:**

The State of Maine does not operate any public housing units directly, nor does it receive any funding to do so. When requested, MaineHousing reviews Annual and Five-Year Plans of public housing authorities and issues certifications to those that are consistent with Maine's Consolidated Plan.

### **Actions planned during the next year to address the needs to public housing**

While MaineHousing does not have jurisdiction over public housing agencies, several public housing authorities and other housing and community development agencies are required to obtain a certification that their program plans are consistent with the State of Maine Consolidated Plan. The State Consolidated Plan serves the majority of the state since only a few local jurisdictions develop Consolidated Plan documents. In 2023, MaineHousing will serve as the lead agency for reviewing housing plans for consistency with the housing component of the State Consolidated Plan.

MaineHousing has both a PHA Permanent Financing Demonstration Program and a Short Term Real Estate Acquisition Program (STREAP). STREAP allows partners (including PHAs) to acquire real estate quickly. The funds may be used for real estate acquisition and associated closing costs. Financial Demonstration Program is available to assist PHAs in financing housing development related costs, including acquisition and rehabilitation costs.

### **Actions to encourage public housing residents to become more involved in management and participate in homeownership**

Public housing residents are encouraged to participate in the home buyer programs offered through MaineHousing and its participating lenders, as long as they meet eligibility criteria.

### **If the PHA is designated as troubled, describe the manner in which financial assistance will be provided or other assistance**

MaineHousing is not designated as a troubled PHA.

### **Discussion:**

See Above

## **AP-65 Homeless and Other Special Needs Activities – 91.320(h)**

### **Introduction**

The Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program is designed to help with: operating shelter costs as well as health, employment, and housing services; rapid re-housing and housing stabilization services for homeless individuals and families; and HMIS data collection. This funding opportunity is available to existing emergency shelters throughout the state sponsored by not-for-profit organizations and local municipalities. Administrative guidance for the Emergency Solutions Grant Program is provided through the Homeless Solutions Rule, Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP) Program Guide & Application, ESHAP Navigator Services Guide, MaineHousing ESG Written Standards, and the STEP Admin plan.

### **Describe the jurisdictions one-year goals and actions for reducing and ending homelessness including**

#### **Reaching out to homeless persons (especially unsheltered persons) and assessing their individual needs**

MaineHousing's Homeless Solutions Rule states that all grantees will provide services based upon Rapid Re-Housing or Housing First tenets. Grantees are given access to short, medium, and long-term rapid re-housing resources to assist them in achieving this goal. Shelters are provided training on Rapid Re-Housing and Housing First principles and are required to have a Housing Navigator at each grantee recipient location with a working knowledge of these services and concepts. All households being served complete the Maine Navigator Services Eligibility Assessment (Maine NavSEA) to determine eligibility for services and to guide the client to available housing as quickly and efficiently as possible. Grantees also utilize the Maine Coordinated Entry System (MCES) assessment to assess their current needs and direct them to appropriate housing options within Coordinated Entry. All shelters are given the opportunity to extend their Navigator Services to serve eligible persons experiencing homelessness who are unsheltered.

#### **Addressing the emergency shelter and transitional housing needs of homeless persons**

ESG funding will be utilized for shelter operations and rapid re-housing activities, as well as HMIS data collection. The ESG shelter funding one-year goal is to provide assistance to 5000 persons served by 41 ESG funded providers.

**Helping homeless persons (especially chronically homeless individuals and families, families with children, veterans and their families, and unaccompanied youth) make the transition to permanent housing and independent living, including shortening the period of time that individuals and families experience homelessness, facilitating access for homeless individuals and families to affordable housing units, and preventing individuals and families who were recently homeless from**

## becoming homeless again

- PATH serves at-risk individuals and families with unmet mental illness or co-occurring disorders.
- The SSVF Program provides outreach and case management to at-risk veterans' families statewide.
- Pine Tree Legal Assistance helps people facing evictions in larger cities.
- Maine DHHS uses some BRAP (Bridging Rental Assistance Program) funds for homelessness prevention.
- MaineHousing provides ESG funding and the ESHAP program to 38 shelters.
- MaineHousing provides state funding for a Rapid Rehousing program through six partner agencies across the state
- MaineHousing provides state funding for a Housing Problem Solving program, which utilizes Rapid Resolution approaches and techniques to divert people away from homelessness prior to losing housing, or to rapidly resolve their housing crisis after housing has been lost.

Maine has rapid rehousing efforts funded with both ESG and state funds that work with individuals and families experiencing homelessness to move into housing. These programs fund housing relocation and stabilization services so that participants are not only assisted in their housing search, but are also followed into housing with services to support their stability. Maine also utilizes a regional service hub model and a newly implemented Coordinated Entry System to prioritize and case conference participants based on vulnerability in order to match them with housing resources and services.

**Helping low-income individuals and families avoid becoming homeless, especially extremely low-income individuals and families and those who are: being discharged from publicly funded institutions and systems of care (such as health care facilities, mental health facilities, foster care and other youth facilities, and corrections programs and institutions); or, receiving assistance from public or private agencies that address housing, health, social services, employment, education, or youth needs**

**Foster Care:** Maine DHHS contracts with not-for-profit youth service providers statewide to help youth and families develop healthy transition plans and assist youth in obtaining Transitional Housing, Permanent Housing, and Permanent Supportive Housing, or to remain in care until they have finished their education. Providers actively monitor teens who are discharged from foster care to the streets or shelters, and advocate with Maine DHHS for improved policies and resources.

**Health Care:** Hospital Discharge Planning Guidelines have been developed by the Statewide Homeless Council and Maine hospitals regarding the discharge of homeless patients. The Guidelines instruct hospitals to begin the discharge planning process upon admission. Patients are to be discharged with appropriate clothing and with a plan for accessing required medications/supplies. MCoC members also monitor discharges to shelters and follow up with hospitals as needed. Each Maine hospital or community discharge location must designate a management team member to oversee ongoing compliance with the Guidelines.

**Mental Health:** The Guidelines above also include discharge planning for patients with mental health issues, instructing hospitals to begin the discharge planning process upon admission, and working with appropriate providers. MCoC members monitor discharges of patients with mental illness to shelters and follow up as

necessary. The Statewide Homeless Council is lead an effort to create a Medicaid Waiver for long-term homeless individuals that improves housing search and tenancy support options. Placement options include family, residential treatment facilities, market rate apartments, boarding homes, and other federal-, state- or locally-funded housing options (such as Section 515 rental units, LIHTC-funded projects, HOPWA- funded housing, local- or state-funded residential recovery or transitional housing, group homes, and/or halfway houses). Individuals needing higher levels of medical care may be placed in private non-medical institutions.

**Corrections:** The Statewide Homeless Council and MCoC oppose any policy that releases inmates to shelters. Although no specific Department of Corrections (DoC) policy exists to prevent release of offenders to shelters, Maine DoC's goal is to prevent release to shelters. To achieve this goal, DoC's policy is to begin pre-release planning 45 days prior to release (County jails begin pre-release planning at 90 days). MCoC providers work collaboratively with prison staff to help find community housing and supportive services (when needed) for inmates following release. STEP vouchers are also available with very limited parameters.

### **Discussion**

See Above





Action Plan 2022 57 OMB Control No: 2506-0117 (exp. 09/30/2021).

MaineHousing administers a \$1,465,427 million Department of Health and Human Services Lead Paint Hazard Abatement Program that provides grants to assist single-family, owner occupied homes and owners of residential rental units to make their homes and apartments lead safe. The units served with these funds must have a child(ren) eligible for MaineCare residing in the home. Owners of the residential rental units are required to rent to low-income renters (at or below 100% AMI) and the units must remain affordable (Fair Market Rent rates) for four years after the completion of the abatement work.

HUD-funded Lead Hazard Reduction Grant Program.

Achieving lead safe homes is accomplished by using licensed lead abatement contractors to abate lead-based paint hazards and may involve interior and exterior work. Lead-based paint abatement measures employed for both the HUD-funded and State-funded programs are based on a lead design plan and may include paint removal or stabilization, encapsulation or replacement of siding, as well as door and window replacements.

The State of Maine has an efficient institutional structure through which housing and community development programs are delivered. DECD is the administrator of CDBG funds and MaineHousing is the administrator of HOME, HTF and ESG funding. Both MaineHousing and DECD participate in a number of standing meetings with representatives from state and local government, the Continuum of Care, and not-for-profit and private providers of housing, homelessness and economic development services.

### **Actions planned to reduce the number of poverty-level families**

The State of Maine has not formally adopted a statewide anti-poverty strategy. However, the strategy and goals of the Five-Year Consolidated Plan and the Annual Action Plan directly address the issues of individuals who are living in poverty.

In Maine, there is a statewide network of Community Action Agencies (CAAs) with a common purpose of providing services to low income people across Maine. The goal of these agencies is to empower low income people to lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

### **Actions planned to develop institutional structure**

The State of Maine has an efficient institutional structure through which housing and community development programs are delivered. DECD is the administrator of CDBG funds and MaineHousing is the administrator of HOME, HTF and ESG funding. Both MaineHousing and DECD participate in a number of standing meetings with representatives from state and local government, the Continuum of Care, and not-for-profit and private providers of housing, homelessness and economic development services.

### **Actions planned to enhance coordination between public and private housing and social service agencies**

A number of private sector, public and social service agencies have been involved in the Consolidated Planning process. Continued coordination with these groups will be a key to the success of the

plan. MaineHousing plans to maintain communications with pertinent individuals and groups, both via traditional methods and through new technologies (e.g. on-line meetings, internet-based survey's, etc.)

Both MaineHousing and DECD are members of many different trade organizations and advisory boards. This involvement provides an opportunity to enhance coordination. Additionally both agencies participate in a number of standing meetings with representatives from state and local government, not-for-profit and private providers of housing, economic development organizations, the Continuum of Care and homelessness services.

**Discussion:**

Please see above

**Program Specific Requirements**

**AP-90 Program Specific Requirements – 91.320(k)(1,2,3)**

**Introduction:**

HOME, ESG and CDBG funding is open to all eligible applicants. The Rental Loan Program Guide, the CDBG Program Statement, the Homeless Program Rule, the ESHAP Program Guide, the STEP Program Guide, and the Consolidated Plan outline the respective programs.

**Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)  
Reference 24 CFR 91.320(k)(1)**

Projects planned with all CDBG funds expected to be available during the year are identified in the Projects Table. The following identifies program income that is available for use that is included in projects to be carried out.

- 1. The total amount of program income that will have been received before the start of the next program year and that has not yet been reprogrammed 0
- 2. The amount of proceeds from section 108 loan guarantees that will be used during the year to address the priority needs and specific objectives identified in the grantee's strategic plan. 0
- 3. The amount of surplus funds from urban renewal settlements 0
- 4. The amount of any grant funds returned to the line of credit for which the planned use has not been included in a prior statement or plan 0
- 5. The amount of income from float-funded activities 0
- Total Program Income: 0**

**Other CDBG Requirements**

- 1. The amount of urgent need activities 0
- 2. The estimated percentage of CDBG funds that will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income. Overall Benefit - A consecutive period of one, two or three years may be used to determine that a minimum overall benefit of 70% of CDBG funds is used to benefit persons of low and moderate income. Specify the years covered that include this Annual Action Plan. 80.00%

**HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME)  
Reference 24 CFR 91.320(k)(2)**

- 1. A description of other forms of investment being used beyond those identified in Section 92.205 is as follows:  
  
Maine utilizes only the forms of investment included in Section 92.205.
- 2. A description of the guidelines that will be used for resale or recapture of HOME funds when used for

homebuyer activities as required in 92.254, is as follows:

MaineHousing does not intend to use HOME funds for homebuyer activities.

3. A description of the guidelines for resale or recapture that ensures the affordability of units acquired with HOME funds? See 24 CFR 92.254(a)(4) are as follows:

MaineHousing does not intend to use HOME funds for homebuyer activities.

4. Plans for using HOME funds to refinance existing debt secured by multifamily housing that is rehabilitated with HOME funds along with a description of the refinancing guidelines required that will be used under 24 CFR 92.206(b), are as follows:

The MaineHousing Rental Loan Program (RLP) Guide is the document which governs lending activities, including those projects financed with HOME funds. The RLP Guide specifically refers to compliance with 24 CFR Part 92 for any project which uses HOME funds. The RLP Guide describes eligible applicants and the application process. The RLP Guide is available on the MaineHousing website.

The refinancing requirements include the following conditions:

- Demonstrate that rehabilitation is the primary eligible activity and ensure that this requirement is met by establishing a minimum level of rehabilitation per unit or a required ratio between rehabilitation and refinancing.
  - Require a review of management practices to demonstrate that disinvestment in the property has not occurred; that long-term needs of the project can be met; and that the feasibility of serving the targeted population over an extended affordability period can be demonstrated.
  - State whether the new investment is being made to maintain current affordable units, create additional affordable units, or both.
  - Specify the required period of affordability, whether it is a minimum 15 years or longer.
  - Specify whether the investment of HOME funds may be state-wide or limited to a specific geographic area, such as a community identified in a neighborhood revitalization strategy under 24 CFR 91.315(g) or a federally designated Empowerment Zone or Enterprise Community.
  - State that HOME funds cannot be used to refinance multifamily loans made or insured by any federal program, including the CDBG program.
5. If applicable to a planned HOME TBRA activity, a description of the preference for persons with special needs or disabilities. (See 24 CFR 92.209(c)(2)(i) and CFR 91.220(l)(2)(vii)).

Eligibility for HOME TBRA requires the applicant to be homeless according to HUD definition. There are no further preferences.

6. If applicable to a planned HOME TBRA activity, a description of how the preference for a specific

category of individuals with disabilities (e.g. persons with HIV/AIDS or chronic mental illness) will narrow the gap in benefits and the preference is needed to narrow the gap in benefits and services received by such persons. (See 24 CFR 92.209(c)(2)(ii) and 91.220(l)(2)(vii)).

See Above

7. If applicable, a description of any preference or limitation for rental housing projects. (See 24 CFR 92.253(d)(3) and CFR 91.220(l)(2)(vii)). Note: Preferences cannot be administered in a manner that limits the opportunities of persons on any basis prohibited by the laws listed under 24 CFR 5.105(a).

N/A

**Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)  
Reference 91.320(k)(3)**

1. Include written standards for providing ESG assistance (may include as attachment)

Please see the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Written Standards (attached).

2. If the Continuum of Care has established centralized or coordinated assessment system that meets HUD requirements, describe that centralized or coordinated assessment system.

Please see the attached Maine Coordinated Entry System Policies and Procedures

3. Identify the process for making sub-awards and describe how the ESG allocation available to private nonprofit organizations (including community and faith-based organizations).

Not Applicable

4. If the jurisdiction is unable to meet the homeless participation requirement in 24 CFR 576.405(a), the jurisdiction must specify its plan for reaching out to and consulting with homeless or formerly homeless individuals in considering policies and funding decisions regarding facilities and services funded under ESG.

MaineHousing and its ESG Grantees currently meet the homeless participation requirement in 24 CFR 576.405(a).

5. Describe performance standards for evaluating ESG.

With assistance from HUD Technical Assistance, a monitoring tool, which includes a risk analysis score, and a CoC reporting mechanism have been created and are currently in use. HMIS data for ESHAP is regularly compiled and reviewed to gain an understanding of how the program is performing in relation to serving and housing clients. Data quality is also measured for ESHAP providers regularly, and providers are expected to maintain or improve data quality levels.

**Housing Trust Fund (HTF)**  
**Reference 24 CFR 91.320(k)(5)**

1. How will the grantee distribute its HTF funds? Select all that apply:

Applications submitted by eligible recipients

2. If distributing HTF funds through grants to subgrantees, describe the method for distributing HTF funds through grants to subgrantees and how those funds will be made available to state agencies and/or units of general local government. If not distributing funds through grants to subgrantees, enter "N/A".

Not Applicable

3. If distributing HTF funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients,

a. Describe the eligibility requirements for recipients of HTF funds (as defined in 24 CFR § 93.2). If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, enter "N/A".

Eligible applicants are:

- Successful LIHTC applicants

Ineligible Applicants include:

- The Applicant, any Principal thereof, or Affiliates of either
  - a) has an uncorrected IRS Form 8823 in connection with any LIHTC Project to the extent it is correctable unless previously waived by MaineHousing;
  - b) has been declared in default or has been 60 calendar days or more delinquent on any loan with MaineHousing, unless the default or delinquency has been cured or there is an approved payment or workout plan in good standing prior to the Application deadline;
  - c) has ever been the owner of any project in which MaineHousing has foreclosed a mortgage interest or received a deed-in-lieu of foreclosure of a mortgage interest unless previously waived by MaineHousing;
  - d) is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or excluded from participation in any federal or state programs;
  - e) has in the last 10 years either commenced or had commenced against it any proceeding in or for bankruptcy, receivership, reorganization or any other arrangement for relief from creditors commenced against it that affected a MaineHousing-funded project that was not dismissed within 90 calendar days; or
- The tax credit syndicator, investor, or Affiliates of either
  - a) transferred its interest in any LIHTC Project after March 25, 2014 in violation of the Ownership

Transfer Rule; or

b) failed to make any required capital contributions with respect to any LIHTC Project, and has not corrected such actions prior to the Application deadline.

MaineHousing may reject the Application if it determines the deficiencies are not addressed. MaineHousing may also require financial statements from the Applicant, Principal thereof, or Affiliates of either.

Funds remaining after the initial Request For Proposals (RFP) process may be distributed by MaineHousing under a subsequent RFP available to all or a subset of the above eligible recipients. Individuals are not eligible to receive direct assistance from the HTF. The State does not intend to use sub-grantees in the 2024 funding cycle.

b. Describe the grantee's application requirements for eligible recipients to apply for HTF funds. If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, enter "N/A".

MaineHousing will distribute HTF funds through a competitive process by selecting applications that are submitted by eligible recipients under the rules of MaineHousing's Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) for LIHTC. Scoring will be based upon a combination of the required selection criteria located at 24 CFR§91.320[k][5] and selection criteria adopted by MaineHousing. The QAP will be available on the MaineHousing website.

c. Describe the selection criteria that the grantee will use to select applications submitted by eligible recipients. If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, enter "N/A".

The selection criteria will be included in the QAP and will include all of the following (listed in order of highest priority to least priority):

Threshold Criteria: (Required for the application to be eligible)

All tenants must be limited to 30% of AMI or less.

*For rental housing, the duration of the units' affordability period*

MaineHousing will require that affordability be for a 30 year term. The affordability requirements will be

outlined in a deed covenant that will be recorded in the applicable registry of deeds.

Scoring Criteria:

- Extent to which project provides housing and services to vulnerable populations (for HTF units)
- Extent to which applicant demonstrates ability to undertake required eligible development activities and obligate funds in a timely manner
- Extent to which applicant demonstrates their ability to make use of additional funding sources
- Extent to which applicant demonstrates a satisfactory credit history and adequate financial capacity to own and operate the housing, including the use of any available rental assistance funding.
- Extent to which applicant demonstrates control of the development site.
- Extent to which project provides the required number of lower income units.
- Extent to which project prioritizes underserved areas.
- Extent to which project meets the State’s housing priority needs as described in the Consolidated Plan: Improve and Preserve the Quality of Housing, Expand Affordable Housing Opportunities, and/or Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability.

In addition, the management agent for the housing must demonstrate successful experience in managing similar properties.

d. Describe the grantee’s required priority for funding based on geographic diversity (as defined by the grantee in the consolidated plan). If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, enter “N/A”.

MaineHousing will regard the entire State of Maine as the eligible area for purposes of the HTF. However, applicants will receive points for projects that will be developed in locations that have been designated as high opportunity areas or areas that are underserved.

e. Describe the grantee’s required priority for funding based on the applicant's ability to obligate HTF funds and undertake eligible activities in a timely manner. If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, enter “N/A”.

As noted above, applicants will be evaluated on project readiness, including local approvals, architectural plans and site control. Additionally, MaineHousing will consider an applicant's track-record for developing projects successfully within a reasonable timeframe.

f. Describe the grantee’s required priority for funding based on the extent to which the rental project has Federal, State, or local project-based rental assistance so that rents are affordable to extremely low-income families. If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, enter “N/A”.

MaineHousing may make Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers available on a “project-based” basis for eligible units funded with HTF.

g. Describe the grantee’s required priority for funding based on the financial feasibility of the project beyond the required 30-year period. If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, enter “N/A”.

MaineHousing will require that affordability be for a 30 year term. The affordability requirements will be outlined in a deed covenant that will be recorded in the applicable registry of deeds.

h. Describe the grantee’s required priority for funding based on the merits of the application in meeting the priority housing needs of the grantee (such as housing that is accessible to transit or employment centers, housing that includes green building and sustainable development features, or housing that serves special needs populations). If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, enter “N/A”.

All applications will be required to address one or more of the following Consolidated Plan priorities: Improve Housing Quality, Expand the Supply of Affordable Housing, and/or Help Maine People Attain Housing Stability.

i. Describe the grantee’s required priority for funding based on the extent to which the application makes use of non-federal funding sources. If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, enter “N/A”.

See scoring criteria above.

4. Does the grantee’s application require the applicant to include a description of the eligible activities to be conducted with HTF funds? If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, select “N/A”.

Yes

5. Does the grantee’s application require that each eligible recipient certify that housing units assisted with HTF funds will comply with HTF requirements? If not distributing funds by selecting applications submitted by eligible recipients, select “N/A”.

Yes

**6. Performance Goals and Benchmarks.** The grantee has met the requirement to provide for performance goals and benchmarks against which the grantee will measure its progress, consistent with the grantee’s goals established under 24 CFR 91.315(b)(2), by including HTF in its housing goals in the housing table on the SP-45 Goals and AP-20 Annual Goals and Objectives screens.

Yes

**7. Maximum Per-unit Development Subsidy Amount for Housing Assisted with HTF Funds.** Enter or attach the grantee’s maximum per-unit development subsidy limits for housing assisted with HTF funds.

The limits must be adjusted for the number of bedrooms and the geographic location of the project. The limits must also be reasonable and based on actual costs of developing non-luxury housing in the area.

If the grantee will use existing limits developed for other federal programs such as the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) per unit cost limits, HOME’s maximum per-unit subsidy amounts, and/or Public Housing Development Cost Limits (TDCs), it must include a description of how the HTF maximum per-unit development subsidy limits were established or a description of how existing limits developed for another program and being adopted for HTF meet the HTF requirements specified above.

Total Development Cost (TDC).

Cost reasonableness will be evaluated using an index, which is the weighted average of the TDC per unit and the TDC per bedroom. For mixed-use projects, the TDC for only the residential portion of the project, including common areas, will be used for this calculation. The weighted average will be calculated as follows:

$$([2 \times \text{TDC/unit}] + [\text{TDC/bedroom}]) \text{ divided by } 3.$$

The product of this calculation will be referred to throughout this document as the “TDC Index”. An Application will be rejected if the TDC Index exceeds the TDC Index Cap below for a project of its type at any time prior to the later of the construction loan closing or carryover allocation.

**Type of Project**

**TDC Index Cap**

Adaptive Reuse	\$337,500 per unit
New construction	\$318,750 per unit
Acquisition and rehabilitation of existing housing	\$206,250 per unit

**8. Rehabilitation Standards.** The grantee must establish rehabilitation standards for all HTF-assisted housing rehabilitation activities that set forth the requirements that the housing must meet upon project completion. The grantee’s description of its standards must be in sufficient detail to determine the required rehabilitation work including methods and materials. The standards may refer to applicable codes or they may establish requirements that exceed the minimum requirements of the codes. The grantee must attach its rehabilitation standards below.

In addition, the rehabilitation standards must address each of the following: health and safety; major systems; lead-based paint; accessibility; disaster mitigation (where relevant); state and local codes, ordinances, and zoning requirements; Uniform Physical Condition Standards; Capital Needs Assessments (if applicable); and broadband infrastructure (if applicable).

MaineHousing will utilize the MaineHousing Quality Standards and Procedures Manual (located on the MaineHousing website) to ensure that the rehabilitation standards located at §93.301[b] are met for all housing units rehabilitated with HTF funds. The MaineHousing Manual covers all applicable accessibility requirements, and state and local standards, codes, regulations, and zoning requirements. In addition, MaineHousing will further require that:

- The project team shall provide an estimate (based on age and condition) of the remaining useful life of the major building systems upon project completion. Major systems include: structural support and roofing; cladding and weatherproofing (e.g., windows, doors, siding, gutters); plumbing; electrical; and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning.
- For multifamily housing with 26 or more total units, the useful life of systems must be determined through a capital needs assessment that determines the work to be performed and identifies the long-term physical needs of the project.
- If the remaining useful life of one or more major systems is less than the applicable period of affordability, MaineHousing will ensure that a replacement reserve is established and that adequate monthly payments are made to repair or replace the systems as needed.

At the onset of any project, MaineHousing will conduct on-site inspections with qualified UPCS inspectors on staff to identify any deficiencies from HUD’s Uniform Physical Condition Standards (UPCS). Any such deficiencies will be addressed in the renovation scopes of work. Follow-up inspections will be conducted at the completion of the project to assure any and all identified deficiencies have been properly addressed. (Attached are UPCS Inspectable Items and Observable Deficiencies)

## Lead-based Paint

Unless a property or housing unit is exempt from HUD's lead-based paint regulations at 24 CFR Part 35, as provided in §35.115, MaineHousing will require the following for rehabilitation activities assisted with HTF funds:

1. Prior to the start of any rehabilitation work at a project site, a lead-based paint (LBP) risk assessment by a Lead Risk Assessor certified by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (Maine DEP), and paint testing on painted surfaces to be disturbed or replaced during rehabilitation activities, including housing units, common areas servicing the units, and exterior painted surfaces, will be conducted in accordance with the Part 35 requirements and established protocols under the Maine DEP's Lead Management Regulations – Chapter 424 (Maine DEP Lead Regulations), including a written report with findings, conclusions and recommendations.
1. If the LBP risk assessment indicates the presence of LBP, the Part 35 provisions for the level of federal rehabilitation assistance applicable to the project, and any related requirements of the Maine DEP Lead Regulations, will apply to the project, as follows:

Projects receiving an average of \$5,000 or less per unit in federal rehabilitation assistance  
Projects receiving an average of over \$5,000 but no more than \$25,000 per unit in federal rehabilitation assistance.  
Projects receiving an average of more than \$25,000 per unit in federal rehabilitation assistance.

3. Ongoing LBP maintenance and re-evaluation in accordance with §35.1355 will be required if LBP has been identified on a project site.





**9. Resale or Recapture Guidelines.** Below, the grantee must enter (or attach) a description of the guidelines that will be used for resale or recapture of HTF funds when used to assist first-time homebuyers. If the grantee will not use HTF funds to assist first-time homebuyers, enter “N/A”.

N/A

**10. HTF Affordable Homeownership Limits.** If the grantee intends to use HTF funds for homebuyer assistance and does not use the HTF affordable homeownership limits for the area provided by HUD, it must determine 95 percent of the median area purchase price and set forth the information in accordance with §93.305. If the grantee will not use HTF funds to assist first-time homebuyers, enter “N/A”.

Any limitation or preference must not violate nondiscrimination requirements in § 93.350, and the grantee must not limit or give preferences to students. The grantee may permit rental housing owners to limit tenants or give a preference in accordance with § 93.303(d)(3) only if such limitation or preference is described in the action plan.

MaineHousing does not intend to limit beneficiaries to any particular segments of the extremely low income population. MaineHousing designed the QAP to enable applicants to target housing for vulnerable populations. However, MaineHousing will not require that applicants serve selected sub-

populations. MaineHousing may award additional scoring points to applicants serving the homeless population.

MaineHousing will require that all units that receive financial assistance from the HTF be affordable to households with incomes at or below 30% of the Area Median Income. This affordability restriction will be outlined in deed covenants that will remain in place for 30 years from the date that the HTF funds are disbursed. This affordability restriction will not be contingent upon any outstanding HTF funding.

**12. Refinancing of Existing Debt.** Enter or attach the grantee’s refinancing guidelines below. The guidelines describe the conditions under which the grantee will refinance existing debt. The grantee’s refinancing guidelines must, at minimum, demonstrate that rehabilitation is the primary eligible activity and ensure that this requirement is met by establishing a minimum level of rehabilitation per unit or a required ratio between rehabilitation and refinancing. If the grantee will not refinance existing debt, enter “N/A.”

Not Applicable

**Discussion:**

MaineHousing’s building standards require design features that are conducive to the construction of long-lasting and durable housing that takes into consideration the potential risks of the natural environment.

MaineHousing will be implementing the NSPIRE standards, and programs will be modified to reflect the changes in protocol once the standards are released.

## ***Attachments***

# Citizen Participation Comments



## Board Members

**Aaron Shapiro**  
Rained Community Development  
Director - Cumberland County  
Board President

**Colp Newell**  
Principal, The Newellson Group  
Board Treasurer

**Glenar Hubbard**  
Principal, Thornton (Crested)  
Board Secretary

**David Birkhofer**  
Vice President, TD Bank

**Elizabeth Seppie**  
Partner, Noyes, Purdy, & Murray

**Jan McCormick**  
Rained Affordable Housing  
Investment Executive

**Luc Nyn**  
Mental Health Program Coordinator  
OCFSCorrections, Jackson, Maine DHS

**Angela Perkin**  
Westbrook Resident

**Thomas Placak**  
Hudson Commons Cooperator,  
Hudson Street

**Jennifer Putnam**  
Executive Director, Wayden

**Jennifer Redmann**  
Deputy Director(CFO), The Genesis Fund

**John Ryan**  
President, Wright Ryan Construction

**Bill Stanzien**  
Co-President, Eastman

**Kimberly Twitchell**  
Maine Regional President, MBT Bank

## Staff Contacts

**Cullen Ryan**  
Executive Director

**Kyra Walker**  
Chief Operating Officer

**Sarah Gallo**  
Occupancy Manager

**Meridith Smith**  
Supportive Housing Manager

**Sarah Groszner**  
Asset Manager

**Sam Lowery**  
Compliance Manager

**Chris Harmon**  
Controller

**Jeremy Jirvin**  
Office Manager

**Vickay Merrill**  
Advocacy Director

**Bill LaCasse**  
Development Director

**Brian Kilgallen**  
Development Director

**Rolyn Wendell**  
Development Office

September 5, 2023

## Public Comments Regarding the Maine 2024 Annual Action Plan

My name is Cullen Ryan and I serve as the Executive Director of Community Housing of Maine or CHOM, the largest supportive housing provider for homeless populations in Maine. Our staff of 12 works collaboratively with more than 50 different service provider organizations to effectively and efficiently house more than 1200 of Maine's most vulnerable people. I serve in various leadership roles in working to end homelessness and have been working with homeless populations for 36 years.

I write to respectfully offer comments on the Maine 2024 Annual Action Plan, currently being drafted by MaineHousing and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD).

1) As with recent years, I commend MaineHousing for carefully crafting plans to align with Maine's Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness. I am particularly pleased to see that the Stability Through Engagement Program (STEP), one of the tools very much in keeping with that plan, has transitioned into a true two-year program as of 2021, including up to twenty-four months of rental assistance. I also applaud MaineHousing for including the rollover preference to Section 8 for the relatively few people who need that assistance when their STEP subsidy expires in the most recent Plan. I fully support MaineHousing retaining these improvements in its 2024 Plan, as they make STEP an optimized tool for ending homelessness.

*MaineHousing is committed to supporting the Stability Through Engagement Program (STEP). We have seen an increase in the number of families seeking continued assistance through the HCV program when their STEP subsidy expires. Our goal is to integrate the STEP vouchers with Coordinated Entry in ways that the appropriate resources is available to meet the specific needs of the family.*

2) Thank you for targeting the Housing Trust Fund (HTF) to people needing permanent supportive housing (PSH) in last year's Annual Action Plan. I strongly encourage continuing this in the 2024 Plan by continuing to feather this funding, and as such PSH, in with Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties. These two funding sources blend well and will enhance Maine's ability to serve vulnerable populations within larger housing developments. There has never been a higher need for permanent supportive housing (PSH) in Maine. The HTF has become one of Maine's more important resources for ending long term homelessness because it creates housing used to stably house this population. Feathering this funding into LIHTC properties and coupling it with rental subsidies works to serve extremely low-income populations experiencing chronic homelessness, so long as support accompanies each person housed. At the same time, I am pleased that MaineHousing has returned to using the state HOME fund to create small, bricks and mortar PSH. Maine is behind in meeting this critical need and could use a significant injection of flexible resources to allow for more creative PSH models.

Thank you for making Project-Based Section 8 (PBS8) available for PSH projects – I urge that you continue to do so. PBS8 makes housing affordable and allows for deep targeting and

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[www.chomhousing.org](http://www.chomhousing.org)



lower barrier access, especially important for people experiencing homelessness with extremely low incomes, and it makes it feasible for populations that are disabled. PBS8 has allowed Housing First models to exist in Maine, and it has allowed people experiencing long-term or chronic homelessness to be stably housed. I would encourage MaineHousing to consider making critical PBS8 available for permanent supportive housing projects developed through the LIHTC program as a strategy to significantly increase the supply of PSH. This would allow housing developers to leverage other funding resources for the construction and/or acquisition/rehab of the housing itself, using PBS8 to feasibly address operational costs. The timing of this model is perfect; LD 2 funded in the budget will create a vehicle for at least 20 hours of support services each week for people experiencing chronic homelessness. This level of support will ensure the population's success in housing. Blending PSH into LIHTC properties would significantly increase capacity for urgently needed permanent supportive housing development in Maine. Thank you for including a larger point incentive in the QAP for this purpose.

*MaineHousing has a Supportive Housing Program, the HOME-ARP program, and the Recovery Housing Program specifically to address supportive housing needs. All of these units can receive PBVs. As far as creating Supportive Housing projects through LIHTC is concerned, we believe that the 9% LIHTC program is our best means for creating units at 60% of AMI or less, where currently there is the greatest need. That said, we encourage the creation of supportive housing units in LIHTC projects in a number of ways. Those units using HTF funding in LIHTC projects receive PBVs. The total number of PBVs available from MaineHousing is limited and must be spread among the many projects to address the myriad needs that Maine is faced with.*

*There are two scoring criteria to address the special needs of residents of our LIHTC projects in our QAP:*

*Populations with Special Needs.*

*The Project provides a set-aside for at least 20%, but not less than 4 of the units, for Persons Experiencing Homelessness or persons who have disabilities, are victims of domestic violence, or have other special housing needs, to create permanent supportive housing for persons who require that level of intervention within the special needs populations.*

*The Applicant must set aside units for the specific population(s) that qualify for the set-aside, maintain a separate waiting list for these units and make appropriate, voluntary services available through a qualified third-party provider other than the resident service coordinator required under Section 5.L.*

*Additional funding from the Housing Trust Fund and/or Project-based Vouchers will be made available as necessary.*

*National Housing Trust Fund.*

*The Applicant agrees to accept and use any funding from MaineHousing's National Housing Trust Fund program for the Project. Any funding award will require a certain number of units in the Project to be affordable to and occupied by Extremely Low Income households.*

*Awarding points is not a commitment of funding from the National Housing Trust Fund.*

3) Thank you for using ESG funds for the ESHAP program – please continue to do so in the 2024 Annual Action Plan. There is brilliance to this design as it puts housing navigators to work in homeless shelters to support access to housing and to support people after they secure housing. Most homeless shelters would have no other means to pay for integral housing navigators. ESHAP is perfectly in keeping with Goal One of Maine's Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness.

One City Center, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor · Portland, ME 04101 · phone 207.879.0347 · fax 207.879.0348  
[www.chomhousing.org](http://www.chomhousing.org)



Thank you for streamlining ESHAP resource allocations. And thank you for program improvements that expand this critical program to other organizations and nonprofits that are not classified as emergency shelters, similar to MaineHousing's Rapid Re-Housing Program. I hope that this practice continues in 2024 because it will assist in Maine's critically needed homelessness diversion strategy. It also allows for "virtual" homeless shelters that provide everything needed to end homelessness while a person stays very briefly (if at all) in a motel, etc. This deepens Maine's toolbox in ending and preventing homelessness, and Maine has numerous dedicated organizations standing at the ready and well-poised to carry out this critical housing access and stability work.

*MaineHousing plans to continue the practice of allowing nonprofit organizations serving persons experiencing homelessness, but not operating physical shelters, to apply for and be awarded funding through ESHAP. Funded providers are included in the Substitution and Performance Shares of the allocation, allowing for the funding of housing navigation and stabilization services.*

Thank you for putting such thought into well-designed approaches to resource design and allocation in recent years.

Please consider furthering diversion and prevention efforts including in particular funding additional housing support workers – people who can help the homeless population find their way into housing. This model has proven successful in places like Hennepin County Minnesota where 1200 people in Emergency Rental Assistance funded hotels became 0 people in hotels largely through investments in Housing Focused Case Management. This model has produced a 97% retention rate in housing. Hennepin County also benefited from motels/hotels being converted into single-room occupancy housing, which increased housing opportunities for this population.

*MaineHousing currently funds diversion efforts with non-federal funds. MaineHousing intends to continue to do so in 2024.*

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment in advance of the 2024 Annual Action Plan being formally drafted. I appreciate your effort to attract broad stakeholder input and support.



# State of Maine

**Community Development Block Grant Program**

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## 2024 Program Statement

Office of Community Development  
111 Sewall Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
59 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0059  
Phone: (207) 624-7484  
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2024 PROGRAM STATEMENT

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The Office of Community Development reserves the right to fund only those applications deemed to be in the best interest of, and that offer definable benefits to, the State of Maine and the Community Development Block Grant Program. The Director of the Office of Community Development (OCD) may waive any requirement of the program provided such waiver would not be out of compliance with CDBG Program regulations.

**MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROGRAM 2024  
PROGRAM STATEMENT**

**SUMMARY**

This Program Statement describes the method by which 2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funds will be distributed. The CDBG program is administered pursuant to 5 M.R.S.A 13073. DECD held an initial virtual combined public forum/hearing regarding the development of this Program Statement on September 8, 2023.

**SECTION 1. PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

**A. CDBG OBJECTIVES**

All CDBG funded activities must meet one of three National Objectives of the program. These objectives are:

- Benefit to low and moderate income persons;
- Prevention and/or elimination of slum and blight conditions; and
- Meeting community development needs having a particular urgency.

The Maine CDBG Program serves as a catalyst for local governments to implement programs which meet one of the three National Objectives, and:

- Are part of a long-range community strategy; or State of Maine Strategic Economic Development Plan
- Improve deteriorated residential and business districts and local economic conditions
- Provide the conditions and incentives for further public and private investments
- Foster partnerships between groups of municipalities, state and federal entities, multi-jurisdictional organizations, and the private sector to address common community and economic development problems; and
- Minimize development sprawl consistent with the State of Maine Growth Management Act and support the revitalization of downtown areas.

## B. METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION:

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DECD, through the Office of Community Development (OCD), offers programs to assist municipalities to achieve their community and economic development objectives. The 2024 Program Statement provides a description of the selection criteria that OCD will use to allocate CDBG funds among communities. Programs are grouped under the three categories listed below.

### 1. Community Development

- A. Home Repair Network
- B. Housing Assistance Grants
- C. Public Infrastructure Grants
- D. Downtown Revitalization Grants
- E. Public Service Grants
- F. Small Business Development Centers
- G. Maine Development Foundation/Downtown Center Assistance
- H. Urgent Need Grants
- I. Special Projects
- J. Community Enterprise
- K. Rural Housing Preservation Program
- L. YMCA Childcare Program

### 2. Economic Development

- A. Grants to Municipalities for Direct Business Support
- B. Micro-Enterprise Grants

### 3. Technical Assistance

## C. STATE ADMINISTRATION:

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**1. General Administration Allocation:** Pursuant to Section 106(d) (3) (A) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (the Act), the DECD will utilize \$100,000 plus 2% of its allocation from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer Maine's CDBG Program in accordance with Federal and State requirements.

**2. Technical Assistance Administration Allocation:** Pursuant to Section 106(d) (5) of the Act, DECD will utilize up to 1% of its allotment from HUD to provide technical assistance in accordance with Federal and State requirements.

**3. Exclusion of Entitlement Communities and Counties:** The entitlement communities of Auburn, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland and all of Cumberland County with the exception of Brunswick and Frye Island, are not eligible to receive State CDBG program funds.

### 4. Grant Administration Requirement:

Grantees must employ, or contract with, a qualified CDBG Grant Administrator approved by the Office of Community Development. All planning activities are exempt from this requirement.

#### D. PROGRAM TIMEFRAME

Application deadlines – All Letters of Intent must be received via e-mail by the Office of Community Development on or before 4:00PM EST on the dates listed below.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Letter of Intent Due Date VIA E-MAIL</b>	<b>Application Due Date By Invitation Only</b>
Downtown Revitalization	January 26, 2024	March 8, 2024
Economic Development	1 <sup>st</sup> of the month starting July 1, 2024	By invitation only
Housing Assistance	March 22, 2024	May 19, 2024
Public Infrastructure	January 12, 2024	March 1, 2024
Public Service	April 26, 2024	June 7, 2024
Community Enterprise	February 23, 2024	April 12, 2024
Special Projects	TBD	TBD
Urgent Need*	TBD	TBD

\*Funding for this program may be available based upon redistribution, reallocation and/or additional allocation from HUD.

E. 2024 PROGRAM BUDGET

2024 CDBG Budget	<b>\$11,808,636</b>
Administration	335,210
Technical Assistance Administration	117,605
<b><u>Community Development</u></b>	
Rural Housing Preservation Program	1,000,000
Downtown Revitalization Grants	300,000
Home Repair Network Program	1,000,000
Housing Assistance Grants	2,000,000
Public Service Grants	200,000
Public Infrastructure Grants	2,800,000
Regional Council Planning Assistance	150,000
Small Business Development Centers	200,000
Maine Development Foundation/Downtown Center Assistance	300,000
Community Enterprise Grants	600,000
YMCA Childcare Program	400,000
Special Projects	205,821
Urgent Need Grants*	0
<b><u>Economic Development</u></b>	
Economic Development Grants	1,000,000
Micro-Enterprise Assistance Grants	1,200,000
TOTAL 2024 CDBG Funds	<b>11,760,505</b>

Funding for individual categories may change based on actual HUD award.

\*Funding for this program may be available based upon redistribution, reallocation and/or additional allocation from HUD.

## F. CERTIFICATIONS

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All communities applying for CDBG funds must certify that they will:

- Minimize displacement and adhere to a locally adopted displacement policy in compliance with section 104(d) of the Housing and Community Development Act, 24 CFR part 42;
- Take action to affirmatively further fair housing and comply with the provisions of Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968;
- Not attempt to recover certain capital costs of improvements funded in whole or in part with CDBG funds;
- Establish a community development plan;
- Meet all required State and Federal public participation requirements;
- Comply with the Federal requirements of Section 319 of Public Law 101-121, codified at 31 U.S.C. Section 1352, regarding government-wide restriction on lobbying;
- With the exception of administrative or personnel costs, verify that no person who is an employee, agent, consultant, officer, elected officer, or appointed official of State or local government or of any designated public agencies, or sub-recipients which are receiving CDBG funding may obtain a financial interest or benefit, have an interest in or benefit from the activity, or have an interest in any contract, subcontract, or agreement with respect to CDBG activities;
- Any person or firm associated with the administration of the CDBG program award is not on the U.S. Department of Labor's Debarred and Suspended Contractor's List; and
- Review the project proposed in the application to ensure it complies with the community's comprehensive plan and/or applicable state and local land use requirements.

## G. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

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**1. Eligible Applicants:** All units of general local government in Maine, including plantations, except for the entitlement communities of Auburn, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland and all of Cumberland County with the exception of Brunswick and Frye Island are eligible to apply for and receive State CDBG program funds. County governments may apply on behalf of the Unorganized Territory. Groups of local governments may apply for multi-jurisdictional or joint projects. Multi-jurisdictional applications require designation of one local government as the lead applicant and consent for that designation by each participating local government. Counties may apply for the Public Service program on behalf of a collaboration of communities. **Eligible applicants, including counties as defined above may apply for CDBG assistance on behalf of the five Maine Indian Tribes. Maine Indian Tribes are not themselves eligible applicants.** Eligible applicants applying on behalf of a Maine Indian Tribe are

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permitted to apply in the same 2024 CDBG funding category only if the eligible applicant will not directly benefit from the tribal CDBG project.

**2. Eligible Activities:** Applications will be reviewed to determine that the activities proposed are eligible under Section 105(a) of the Act. Ineligible activities will not be considered.

**3. Project Benefit:** Letters of Intent and/or required documentation for all programs will be reviewed to verify that the proposed activities meet at least one of the CDBG Program national objectives pursuant to section 104(b) 3 of the Act. If the activity does not meet a national objective the application will not be considered for funding.

**4. "Growth Related" Preference:** In accordance with M.R.S.A Title 30-A section 4349-A (3-A), OCD is required to give preference in the award of grants to capital investments defined as "growth related" in section 4301(5-B) to communities with certified growth management programs or that have adopted a comprehensive plan and implementation strategy consistent with the goals and guidelines of the subchapter. A municipality that does not obtain a certificate or finding of consistency within 4 years after receipt of the first installment of a financial assistance grant or rejection of an offer of financial assistance will receive a low priority.

**5. Repayment of Grant Funds:** Recipients must repay on demand to the State of Maine all funds expended if CDBG program benefits are not achieved as specified in their contract with the DECD.

**6. Application Threshold:** Incomplete and/or non-conforming applications which do not meet the specifications set forth in the 2024 Program Statement and 2024 CDBG Application Packages will be removed from the scoring process during the threshold review.

**7. Financial Commitments:** Applications for projects not demonstrating a firm financial commitment as required in the application materials will be removed from the scoring process during the threshold review.

**8. Restriction of Grant Awards:** OCD may deny or restrict the award of grants to communities with outstanding audit(s), monitoring findings, or a record of administrative misconduct.

**9. Past Performance:** In order to be eligible to apply for a 2024 Community Development Block Grant program, communities that received CDBG grants in prior years must be in good standing with the Office of Community Development. All Past Performance Criteria will be strictly enforced; however, these criteria may be waived for just cause by the Director of OCD.

**10. Grant Termination:** OCD may terminate a community's grant if progress on the project is not apparent within 6 months from the date of contract signing. The Office of Community Development may grant waivers for just cause.

#### H. EXCLUSIONS:





































































































# Maine Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Policies and Procedures

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Draft based on CES Design Process February 2022

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Revision History

Version	Date – Responsible Party	Key Changes	Status
n/a	9/1/2022 - Erin Kelly, Kate Easter, Tara Hembree, Giff Jamison	Initial Draft	Pending
1.0	9/1/2022 - MCoC Board	Final approval at board meeting	Approved

Draft based on CES Design Process February 2022

## Introduction and Overview

### Overview of Coordinated Entry

Coordinated entry is a consistent, streamlined process for accessing the resources available in the Maine Continuum of Care (MCoC) homeless crisis response system. Through coordinated entry, the MCoC ensures that housing resources and supportive services are used as efficiently and effectively as possible. This is done by assessing households experiencing homelessness quickly and uniformly to connect them to the best available housing resource whenever possible.

### Coordinated Entry Participation

All Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant funded projects are required to participate in the Maine CoC Coordinated Entry Process. Ideally, all homeless assistance projects will participate in Coordinated Entry in some capacity, and the CoC will continue to work to facilitate the participation of new partners.

### Terms & Definitions

The purpose of this section is to provide definitions for many of the federal, state, and local terms that are referenced throughout this document.

<b>By Name List</b>	A comprehensive list of individuals who have been identified as experiencing homelessness in our community.
<b>Chronically Homeless</b>	Chronically homeless means: (1) A "homeless individual with a disability," as defined in Section 401(9) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, who: i. Lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a Safe Haven, or an emergency shelter; AND ii. Has been homeless continuously for at least 12 months or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years, as long as the combined occasions equal at least 12 months and each break in homelessness separating the occasions included at least 7 consecutive nights of not living as described in (i) above.
<b>Case Conferencing</b>	Local process for CE staff to coordinate and discuss ongoing work with persons experiencing homelessness in the community, including the prioritization or active list. The goal of case conferencing is to provide holistic, coordinated, and integrated services across providers, and to reduce duplication.
<b>Continuum of Care</b>	Group responsible for the implementation of the requirements of HUD's CoC Program interim rule and promotes communitywide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness. The CoC is composed of representatives of organizations, including nonprofit homeless providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons.

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<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	Short-term emergency housing available to persons experiencing homelessness.
<b>Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP)</b>	The Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP) provides agencies with funding and technical support to provide services to people experiencing homelessness. MaineHousing utilizes federal Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) funding, along with state funds, to provide funding in three areas: Shelter Operations, Housing Stabilization, and Performance Incentive.
<b>Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG)</b>	HUD funding source to (1) engage homeless individuals and families living on the street; (2) improve the quantity and quality of emergency shelters for homeless individuals and families; (3) help operate these shelters; (4) provide essential services to shelter residents; (5) rapidly rehouse homeless individuals and families; and (6) prevent families and individuals from becoming homeless.
<b>Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)</b>	Local information technology system used by a CoC to collect participant-level data and data on the provision of housing and services to homeless individuals and families and to persons at risk of homelessness. Each CoC is responsible for selecting an HMIS software solution that complies with HUD's data collection, management, and reporting standards.
<b>Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)</b>	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)-funded program to provide outreach and services to people with serious mental illness (SMI) who are homeless, in shelter or on the street, or at imminent risk of homelessness.
<b>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)</b>	PSH is permanent housing with indefinite leasing or rental assistance paired with supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability or families with an adult or child member with a disability achieve housing stability.
<b>Prioritization List</b>	The MCES prioritization list is a subset of the larger hub level Quality By Name List which strives to include the majority of individuals experiencing homelessness in each specific hub area. The MCES prioritization list will be able to be sorted by score on both the state and hub level to help facilitate referrals to housing resource openings.
<b>Rapid Rehousing</b>	Program emphasizing housing search and relocation services and short- and medium-term rental assistance to move homeless persons and families (with or without a disability) as rapidly as possible into permanent housing.
<b>Shelter Plus Care</b>	The SPC (CoC) Program provides housing and supportive services to homeless individuals with disabilities, primarily those with severe and persistent mental illness, substance abuse, and HIV/AIDS. SPC follows a Housing First Model by encouraging recipients to accept supportive services along with rental assistance with a goal of long-term stability in permanent housing.  Program participants provide 30% of their income* towards rent while the remaining amount is subsidized through the SPC (CoC) program.

<b>Transitional Housing</b>	Program providing homeless individuals and families with the interim stability and support to successfully move to and maintain permanent housing. Transitional housing funds may be used to cover the costs of up to 24 months of housing with accompanying supportive services. Program participants must have a lease (or sublease) or occupancy agreement in place when residing in transitional housing.
<b>Service Hub</b>	A group of regional providers that creates local foundation for the prioritization and case conferencing of Coordinated Entry, as well as working collectively toward ending homelessness. Each hub supports regional coordination and resource alignment and provides system level data used to improve performance.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

<b>CoC Board</b>	Responsible for the general oversight of the MCoC, including the CE system, including the approval of the CE Policies & Procedures document.
<b>Coordinated Entry Committee</b>	Committee of the CoC charged with meeting at least monthly to oversee the implementation and evaluation of the Coordinated Entry System.
<b>Coordinated Entry Operator (See Appendix A)</b>	Responsible for the day-to-day operations and management of the overall Coordinated Entry System.
<b>Hub Coordinator</b>	Responsible for hub-level operation and management of the Coordinated Entry System, specifically prioritization and referral case conferencing.
<b>Collaborative Applicant</b>	The MCoC has selected MaineHousing to be their Collaborative Applicant (CA). The CA submits the MCoC NOFO application for funding and administers Planning Grant funds.
<b>HMIS Lead Agency</b>	Operates the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) on the CoC's behalf. Ensures the CE system has access to HMIS software and functionality for the collection, management, and analysis of data on persons served by coordinated entry. Entity designated by the CoC in accordance with HUD's CoC Program interim rule to operate the HMIS on the CoC's behalf.
<b>Participating Project</b>	CoC and ESG funded housing resources that are required to receive their referrals through Maine's Coordinated Entry system. This can include non-CoC and ESG funded housing resources that volunteer to be part of CES.
<b>Access Point</b>	ESHAP-funded shelters, PATH outreach teams (some) and other providers in each of Maine's Service Hubs that are responsible for completing the Coordinated Entry assessment with participants seeking access to housing resources within a hub, entering that information into HMIS or using otherwise agreed upon means for data submission, and participating in case conferencing as appropriate.
<b>Access Partner</b>	Mainstream providers or institutions that provide necessary services or assistance or interact with people who are experiencing homelessness and know how to connect those people to the homeless service response system.

<b>U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)</b>	Federal agency responsible for administering housing and homelessness programs including the CoC and ESG Programs.
<b>U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA)</b>	Federal agency responsible for providing health care and other services, including assistance to end homelessness, to veterans and their families.

Access

Access Model Overview

The Maine CoC Coordinated Entry System will strive to ensure equitable access to housing resources for all Maine residents who are experiencing homelessness. In order to accomplish this across such a vast geography, Coordinated Entry will operate locally within the state’s Service Hub structure. Maine has a total of 9 Service Hub areas, each covering one or more counties. Some towns are assigned to Hubs outside their county where that made more sense in terms of access to resources.

- Hub 1: York
- Hub 2: Cumberland
- Hub 3: Midcoast (Sagadahoc, Knox, Lincoln, Waldo, and Towns of Brunswick and Harpswell)
- Hub 4: Androscoggin
- Hub 5: Western: Oxford, Franklin, and Towns of Livermore and Livermore Falls
- Hub 6: Central: Somerset and Kennebec
- Hub 7: Penquis: Penobscot and Piscataquis
- Hub 8: Downeast: Washington and Hancock
- Hub 9: Aroostook

Each of the 9 Service Hub areas will have designated access points as well as hub partners to help ensure that a household experiencing homelessness in any county will have access to the Coordinated Entry System. The goal of establishing localized access points and partners in each of the Service Hubs is to reduce the number of households who do not know where to turn or who to call when they are experiencing homelessness, and to reduce the need for households to leave their communities of origin to seek crisis housing and services in more populated areas of the state.

Designated access points and their responsibilities are described in the section below. Access partners are organizations or institutions in the community whose role is not dedicated to serving people experiencing homelessness, but who frequently interact with the population. This may include hospitals and healthcare providers, local law enforcement, food pantries, employment agencies, Community Action Agencies (CAP), and more. Access partners will not require a formal designation. Instead, each Service Hub team should conduct the necessary outreach and engagement with local access partners to ensure that they are informed about how to connect their clients, when applicable, to the CoC’s Coordinated Entry system.

Note that access to Coordinated Entry is not the same thing as access to emergency services (e.g., emergency shelter) in each Service Hub geography. All households in need of emergency assistance will be able to access those resources outside of the Coordinated Entry system without first having to complete any sort of Coordinated Entry assessment.

Designated Access Points

Designated access points will include all shelters that receive Emergency Shelter and Housing Assistance Program (ESHAP) funding, as well as many Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) providers. PATH providers will be asked to serve as access points for their participants if they have the local capacity to do so, and will have the option to decline if they do not.

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Because there is such a variety in need and capacity across the state's Service Hub areas, there will also be the option to identify additional access points locally. Additional access points may be necessary if the existing ESHAP or PATH providers in an area are not able to serve as access points for all people experiencing homelessness. This may include households who are staying in emergency shelters that are non-ESHAP funded, households who are staying in transitional housing programs for homeless people that are non-ESHAP funded, and households who are unsheltered but not eligible for services through PATH.

When the need for an additional access point is identified, the Hub Coordinator will serve as the person who coordinates this discussion and communicates the need to the CoC. Additional access points will require approval by the CoC to ensure that one of the following are true:

1. There are available HMIS licenses if the proposed access point does not already have HMIS access; or
2. There is a comprehensive and reasonable plan for ensuring that all participant data is entered into HMIS if the access point is not willing or able to take on the responsibility of HMIS data entry

#### Access Point Responsibilities

Designated access points are responsible for the following activities:

1. All assessor staff must complete the CoC's annual training on how to complete the standardized assessment
2. Access points must complete the standardized assessment with all households experiencing literal homelessness who present for assistance
  - a. Note: access points will not be responsible for assessing those households who are not eligible for their services (e.g., PATH providers will not be responsible for assessing households who are unsheltered but not PATH eligible, ESHAP shelters will not be responsible for assessing households who are not eligible for shelter entry)
3. Access points must enter the participant information captured during the standardized assessment into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or Comparable Database to ensure that assessed households are placed on the prioritization list
4. Access points must participate in case conferencing meetings at the Service Hub level

#### Specialized Access Points for Subpopulations

The Maine CoC allows for specialized access points for specific subpopulations: those fleeing Domestic Violence, Veterans, and Youth. These subpopulations can choose to access their population specific resources as well as the mainstream Coordinated Entry System if they are interested in accessing the housing resources associated.

#### Veterans:

Designated access points for those that served in the military include the Preble Street Veterans Housing Services (VHS) referral line and the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans. Preble Street VHS, a Supportive Services for Veterans Families Grantee, is statewide and is open weekdays from 8:30am to 5:00pm, EST. <https://www.preblestreet.org/what-we-do/housing-services/veterans-housing-services/>. The VA Call Center can be reached 24 hours a day/7 days a week; calls to this hotline will be sent to staff locally at the VA medical center at Togus to follow up with. 1-877-4AID-VET or 1-877-424-3838, <https://www.va.gov/homeless/nationalcallcenter.asp>.

#### Domestic Violence:

Designated access points for those fleeing domestic abuse & violence include all the Domestic Violence Resource Centers (DVRCs) across the state. Survivors can choose to access CES through a DVRC Access Point or through a mainstream Access Point. If they access CES through a mainstream Access Point, they will be given the choice to continue their Assessment where they are or stop the assessment and to be referred to the local DVRC.

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If a Stop & Refer path is chosen, the survivor will be connected to the local DVRC who will then work that survivor from the start of the assessment. Ideally, the survivor will be referred to the DVRC for DV specific support and resources but will continue the CES assessment with the Access Point where they started.

All survivors of domestic abuse & violence or trafficking will be evaluated for eligibility for the DV-specific RRH dollars if referred.

A list of these DVRCs can be found at <https://www.mcedv.org/> and <https://www.wabanak/womenscoalition.org/>. More information can also be found by calling the statewide domestic violence crisis line at 1-800-834-HELP (4357).

#### **Youth:**

Maine's Youth Coordinated Entry system has youth specific shelters that will act as access point: Preble Street's Joe Kreisler Teen Shelter in Portland, <https://www.preblestreet.org/what-we-do/teen-services/joe-kreisler-teen-shelter/>, New Beginnings in Lewiston, <https://newbeginmaine.org/>, and Shaw House in Bangor, <https://www.theshawhouse.org/>. As Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project grantees, Aroostook County Action Program (ACAP) <https://acap.me.org/>, Penquis CAP <https://www.penquis.org/>, and Volunteers of America <https://www.voanne.org/vya-services> locations will also act as access points for the youth CES.

#### **Access Partners**

Access partners are providers or institutions that provide necessary services or assistance or interact with people who are experiencing homelessness and know how to connect those people to the homeless service response system (law enforcement, hospitals, etc.). Service hubs will conduct outreach (written and verbal) to hub partners to ensure that they are aware of Maine's homeless response system structure and how to connect literally homeless households to the resources they need.

Hub partners will have an informal relationship to the hubs; whereas they will continue to connect literally homeless individuals to the emergency homeless response resources they need but will not be required to use a specific form or process. If a Service Hub identifies a trend that indicates the need for a more formal process for hub partners to connect households to access points; this can be established and implemented at the service hub level.

#### **Affirmative Marketing and Outreach**

In each one of Maine's 9 Service Hubs, there will be a need to raise community awareness about the Coordinated Entry System and access to housing resources. Each area will be expected to engage in broad-based, passive marketing in the community – targeted to spaces that people experiencing homelessness frequent. For example, this could take the form of posters and pamphlets about Coordinated Entry and how a household can access the system to be assessed for available housing resources. Other examples of places in which marketing may be beneficial could include public transportation, bottle redemption centers, laundromats, and libraries, among other places. In addition to the need for local marketing and outreach efforts, the Maine CoC will also engage in state-wide marketing and outreach. This may include information about Coordinated Entry access disseminated through newspaper, radio, television, or other conventional media outlets, as well as social media.

#### **Adding Additional Access Points**

The Maine CoC encourages the creation of new access points, should there be a need. The following outlines the process for requesting and approving new access points in specific hubs:

1. Hub Coordinators will be tasked with outreaching local service providers and community partners. In the course of these conversations, HCs will provide the relevant information, including the process of becoming an additional access point and the requirements of an access point, which includes:
  - o participating in the mandatory CES assessment training
  - o administering the CE assessment tool to participants
  - o entering assessment data into HMIS (or determining the approved workaround method)
  - o attending case conferencing hub level meetings as needed
2. Once service providers have been briefed on the requirements of becoming an official access point and have agreed to it, hub coordinators should email the CE Committee Tri-Chairs and Homeless Projects Coordinator at Maine Housing. The email should include the name & contact information for the service provider/community partner that wishes to become an access point. The email should also indicate that the potential access point has been fully briefed on the requirements and that they have agreed to them. Finally, the email should outline if the potential access points already have access to HMIS and how many additional HMIS licenses would be needed, if any.
3. The Homeless Projects Coordinator will check with the HMIS team at Maine Housing to see what the availability of HMIS licenses is and will let the tri chairs know if the number of new licenses that can be approved
4. The hub coordinator will then present the proposed access point at the next CE committee meeting for approval or brainstorming possibilities if there HMIS licenses available.

### Assessment

#### Overview of Standardized Assessment Approach

The Maine CoC will provide a standardized assessment process to all Coordinated Entry participants, ensuring uniform decision-making and coordination of care for households experiencing homelessness in the state. A standardized assessment approach allows for all households to be assessed for housing resources in the same way regardless of where they are assessed and who they are assessed by, with the goal of reducing disparities in access to housing resources and how households are prioritized for them.

The Maine CoC Coordinated Entry Committee, with input from key stakeholders in the community, has designed a standardized assessment tool (See Appendix C). This tool utilizes a phased and progressive engagement approach; first addressing a household's emergency needs, then attempting to identify other natural supports or alternatives to homelessness through a housing problem-solving conversation, and then if need be; assessing for length of time homeless, housing barriers, and other key factors necessary to prioritize households for the resources available through Coordinated Entry. The assessment tool contains a total of five, phased sections:

Addressing Household's Urgent Needs	The first phase focuses on identifying the person's immediate needs to ensure that they are safe (e.g., need access to shelter, need access to food, need connection to DV services)
Housing Problem Solving	The second phase of the assessment is a conversation guide to explore whether the household may have other natural supports or safe alternatives to entering the homeless system of care
Collecting Contact Information	The third phase of the assessment is focused on collecting all of the household's contact information to ensure that the CES knows how to communicate with the household moving forward
Housing History	The fourth phase of the assessment is focused on collecting information about the household's housing and homeless history and barriers to housing.

Housing Preferences	The fifth phase of the assessment is focused on collecting information about the household's housing needs and preferences.
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The assessment tool does not, and in some cases should not, be completed all at once. The goal of a phased, progressive engagement assessment tool is to complete what makes sense in the moment and build off of each section when moving on to the next. Additional detail around use of the tool and assessor staff requirements will be provided in the annual assessor training (see next section) as well as a separate HMIS workflow document.

Assessments will be updated every 6 months, based on the day that the first assessment was completed in full. At this time, if the participant is still experiencing homelessness, updated information can be updated in HMIS or Comparable Database. If the participant's situation has changed so that their prioritization score will be increased, this should be communicated the Project and Hub Coordinators and reflected on the prioritization list. Prioritization scores will not be decreased based on updated information.

#### Assessment Process

After completion of the Assessment Tool, pertinent assessment data is entered into the Maine CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) or Comparable Database. This allows for the creation of the MCES Prioritization list that is used to determine which participant(s) is referred to the housing resource(s) available in the Coordinated Entry System (see Prioritization for more detail).

#### Assessor Training

The Maine CoC is committed to ensuring that all participating access points and assessor staff have sufficient training to implement the Coordinated Entry system in a manner consistent with the design vision and in accordance with the policies and procedures.

The MCoC will provide training annually via the CE Operator, at minimum, to all access points and assessor staff. This training will be mandatory and offered at no cost. Training topics will include the following:

- Review of the CoC's Coordinated Entry policies and procedures
- Intensive training on how to use the assessment tool
- Training on requirements for data collection, case conferencing participation, etc.

#### Participant Autonomy and Appeal Process

It is crucial that persons served by Maine's Coordinated Entry System have the autonomy to identify whether they are uncomfortable or unable to answer any questions during the assessment process. The refusal of the participant to respond to assessment questions shall not adversely affect a household's ability to be added to the prioritization list based on whatever information they are comfortable sharing.

Note that some Maine Continuum of Care funded housing programs require collection and documentation of a participant's disability or other characteristics or attributes as a condition for determining eligibility. Therefore, participants who choose not to provide information in these instances could be limiting potential referral options.

The CoC is committed to ensuring that no information is used to discriminate against or prioritize households for housing and services on a protected basis such as race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sex, age, familial status, disability, actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identify, or marital status.

## Prioritization

### Overview of Standardized Prioritization

The Maine CoC will use the data collected through the Coordinated Entry assessment process to prioritize people experiencing homelessness in the state of Maine for housing resources.

Households will be prioritized based on the numeric score that is produced by the assessment tool. This score is based primarily on a household's length of time homeless (days) in the last three years. The assessment tool also considers additional criteria that may further prioritize a household based on the following:

- "Long-term stayer Status" – households who have 6+ months of homelessness in the past year
- People actively fleeing domestic violence
- People experiencing unsheltered homelessness
- Barriers to accessing housing

This prioritization method will be utilized for all housing resources available through the Coordinated Entry Process.

The Maine CoC prioritization process, to ensure that unsheltered households have equitable access to housing resources, has created a uniform method of taking non-HMIS days homeless into account when establishing a household's length of time homeless in the last three years. Note that while households may have an increased prioritization score at time of assessment due to fleeing domestic violence or experiencing unsheltered homelessness, their overall prioritization score will not decrease, should their situation change. Conversely, prioritization scores may increase due to a change in situation (i.e. going from sheltered to unsheltered homelessness). These changes may be reflected by submitting updated assessment information.

### Prioritization List Management

At least once weekly, the HMIS team at MaineHousing will generate a report from HMIS, in collaboration with MCEDEV from the Comparable Database, that will provide data for the MCE prioritization list. The prioritization list can be viewed on both the state and hub level. This report will include data points generated from completed CE assessments, including, but not limited to, name, date of birth of the participant, prioritization score, and preferred location of housing placement of the participant. The Maine Housing CoC Project Coordinator will work Hub Coordinators and MCEDEV Housing Services Coordinator to cross check the existing prioritization list with the updated weekly reports pulled from HMIS or Comparable Database. The CE prioritization list is a subset of the larger hub level Quality By Name List, this list strives to include the majority of individuals experiencing homelessness in each specific hub area. The MCE prioritization list will be able to be sorted by score on both the state and hub level to help facilitate referrals to housing resource openings.

Participants will be asked to sign releases of information to give permission for their names and personal information to be placed onto the MCE prioritization list. Each participant will be given the opportunity to utilize a case number rather than their name, as well as to share limited personal information. Participants identified as fleeing domestic violence will automatically be assigned a case number before being placed on the prioritization list.

### Overview of Prioritization Process for Victim Service Providers (aka DVRCs)

The primary method of prioritization is the same for VSP access points as it is for mainstream access points. However, due to the required maintenance of confidentiality for those identified as fleeing domestic abuse & violence, sexual assault, stalking, and trafficking, (encoded in the law (Violence Against Women Act, reauthorized in 2022)) DVRC Access Points will use a Subpopulation Referral Form (appendix E) to move survivors onto the Prioritization List.

For the most part, DVRCs will pass survivor request to be added to the CES Prioritization List through the Housing Services Coordinator at MCEDEV who will then assign a DVRC-specific code to the survivor's case and will enter the deidentified name on the By Name List.

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It should be noted that any client may elect to use this referral form to maintain their own confidentiality when being placed on the By Name and Prioritization Lists.

## Referral

### Overview of Referral Process

Referral, in the context of Coordinated Entry, refers to the process by which a participant who is prioritized on the by-names list is connected to a housing opening. All CoC Program- and ESG Program-funded housing projects must accept referrals exclusively through the CoC's defined CE process as described below. Housing resources available from alternate funding streams may also opt in to the Maine CoC's Coordinated Entry process upon request. The referral process will take place at the Service Hub level.

#### *Step 1: Notification of Housing Opening*

Housing provider will notify Hub Coordinator of opening, providing as much information as possible including:

- # of Referrals desired
- Unit size, location
- Key eligibility criteria (e.g., DV only)
- Accessibility
- Services attached or not
- Application process
- Date by which they would like list of referrals

#### *Step 2: Identification of Households to be Referred*

Case conferencing meetings will be used to identify housing needs and preferences for top 10-20 households on the list; therefore Hub Coordinator will be able to make referrals in real time as they are requested by housing providers with openings.

As households with no case manager near top of list, hub team will work together to identify support so that by the time a household is being referred to a housing opening, a case manager or supportive provider has been identified to work with them.

Hub Coordinator will use the by-names list to refer the requested number of prioritized households to the housing opening. In some cases, the household(s) being referred may not be the very first name on the list. In some cases, Hub Coordinator will use housing needs and preferences of those households toward the top to ensure appropriate match. For example, a housing provider may have a unit that is available only to households who have a documented disability. If the first person on the list does not have a disabling condition, Hub Coordinator may look to next person on by-names list.

The Hub Coordinator will send the housing provider a list of the names of the referred households in writing so that they are aware of who they will be hearing from.

#### *Step 3: Notifying Referrals*

Within 3 business days of receiving the request for referrals from the housing provider, the Hub Coordinator will contact the case manager or service provider of the prioritized household to inform them of the referral and the application process that should be followed. The Hub Coordinator will make at least 3 attempts at contact on non-consecutive days. If the case manager or service provider is unreachable at first contact, The Hub Coordinator should utilize multiple methods of contact (phone, e-mail).

In instances where the Service Hub Team has not identified a case manager or provider to support a household on the by-names list, the Hub Coordinator may contact the person directly to inform them of their referral to a housing opening.

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Beginning on the date of the first attempt at contact, the referred household will have 14 days to respond to the housing offer. Hub Coordinator will inform the housing provider of the 14 day period in which they should expect to hear from the identified referrals.

#### *Step 4: Feedback Loop Between Hub Coordinator and Housing Provider*

The housing provider will be responsible for communicating with the Hub Coordinator to inform them of the outcome of the referrals made. The Hub Coordinator will be responsible for updating the status of those household's on the by-names list as appropriate.

Households that decline referral will maintain placement on prioritization list and be referred as appropriate to future housing openings unless they choose to have their name removed from consideration, including from the BNL.

For households that do not respond to housing provider's outreach- Hub Coordinator will work with case manager and/or hub team to determine whether household is active or inactive on the by-names list.

#### *Tie Breakers*

In the event that there are multiple households at the top of the by-names list with the same prioritization score; the Hub Coordinator will determine which household is referred first by using the following tie-breaking factors, in this order:

- Length of time homeless (total # of months homeless in last 3 years)
- Imminent risk of harm or death (to be determined via case conferencing)

#### *Alternate Referral Processes*

Some housing providers may require a specialized or alternative referral process to that which is outlined above. Housing providers that require this alternate process must get approval from the CoC board before moving forward and must otherwise follow all CES policies and procedures, including those regarding participant and provider declined referrals.

#### *Use of Case Conferencing*

Case conferencing will take place within each Service Hub, organized and facilitated by the Hub Coordinator. At launch of Coordinated Entry, case conferencing will take place weekly. Hub Coordinators will work with service hub teams to determine an appropriate cadence of case conferencing meetings over time – dependent upon local needs and capacity.

The purpose of case conferencing will be as follows:

1. Ensure that all households experiencing homelessness in the Service Hub geography are identified, added to the by-names list, and assessed for housing resources
2. Ensure that all households on the by-names list, as they near the top (within 1-20 on list), have an identified service provider that has committed to supporting the household at the time of referral with elements of the process like application and lease-up
3. To discuss the housing needs and preferences of those households nearing the top of the list so that Hub Coordinator is equipped with enough information to make referrals in real time, outside of case conferencing meetings, as they are contacted by housing providers

Each participant will be asked to sign a release of information before being discussed at case conferencing, which can be found in Appendix B.

#### **Case Conferencing for VSPs (aka DVRCs)**

MCEDV Housing Service Coordinator will notify Housing Navigators with clients on the Prioritization list when their client is on the list. Navigators may attend their closest Case Conferencing meeting to best advocate for

the survivors' needs. No PII will be released at Case Conferencing other than what is already on the By Name or Prioritization List.

#### Participant and Provider Declined Referrals

The Maine Coordinated Entry process promotes access for all eligible participants in need of housing by overseeing an objective referral process in which all eligible participants are treated in a consistent manner. *Housing providers are responsible for assuring that a participant meets the contractually required eligibility requirements for their program.*

A referral may be unsuccessful due to a participant refusing the resource, by agency denial, or based on program eligibility requirements not being met. Any unsuccessful referral must be documented by email to the Hub Coordinator with the participant name, date, and reason for denial. The Hub Coordinator will log the client ID, date, and reason of denial into the Coordinated Entry Denial Tracking spreadsheet stored in Sharefile. The Maine CE Steering Committee or Maine Housing as the CE Operator may follow-up with the housing program and the participant referred in order to understand the circumstances of the returned referral.

Program denials will be monitored at the system level. Maine Housing as the CE Operator will include in its quarterly report to the CE Steering Committee and Maine CoC Board data to show the reasons for denial for available housing openings in a given quarter so the committee may monitor and/or troubleshoot trends on a system level.

#### Referral Procedure:

1. Housing providers must accept a participant who is referred and meets established eligibility criteria.
2. The housing provider must provide the reason for the unsuccessful referral in email to the Hub Coordinator and include details regarding the reason the referral was unsuccessful.

#### Reasons for Program Denial:

*A-H may be automatic denials logged by the housing provider. Housing providers may move on to subsequent participants without using system-level case conferencing. Reason I, Health & Safety Risk must follow a system-level case conference process. See below under reason I.*

- a. Participant did not call or show up for their appointment with the housing provider – the housing provider is unable to reach the participant for at least 48 hours and has attempted to reach them through any of the identified means
- b. Ineligible for Housing Program per contractual obligations – a referral was made based on the participant's apparent eligibility, but due to overlooked or undisclosed information, the participant is not eligible for the program. [i.e. additional information was disclosed/discovered impacting program eligibility]
- c. Full capacity- the housing program is at full capacity and does not have an available resource for the referral that was sent.
- d. Participant refused the housing offer- a referral was made, and a participant refused the available resources after speaking with the housing provider and learning more about the program.
- e. Re-enrollment would result in health/safety risk- the participant previously resided in the housing program they were referred to; re-enrollment in the program would result in a significant health and safety risk.
- f. Self-resolved- participant has found permanent housing outside of the Maine CE process.
- g. Falsification of documents- participant falsified documents such as a housing application, failing to disclose information that makes them ineligible for the program.

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h. Local restrictions- participant is restricted locally from occupying a project or housing resource. Examples may be justice-system restrictions on areas people may live; zoning or neighborhood requirements; etc.

i. Health & Safety Risk – the program is denying the person/family for some other reason not described above. The housing provider must inform the participant of the reason the referral was unsuccessful.

#### **Two Step Process for Denials Related to Exhibited Behaviors Causing Health or Safety Concerns**

Based on a participant's exhibited behavior, enrollment in the project would result in a significant health and safety risk. This means a participant may not be denied solely on information derived from background checks, but must be supported by provider observation, reports from other providers or through the participant's application or interview. A denial of this nature is only applicable when a participant has displayed behavior to the project, housing navigator, or other provider staff that warrants a legitimate health or safety concern for the project. Prior to denying a referral based on health or safety reasons, the housing provider must follow a two-step process.

**Step 1 - Attempt to Resolve Concern with Applicant:** Request documentation from the participant and/or meet with the participant to discuss the circumstance and any changes that have occurred to improve the health or safety risk. Documentation requested must be as low-threshold as possible for the participant to retrieve quickly; housing providers are required to accept and review self statements as a potential source of documentation to explain the risk. Additionally, participants cannot be required to enter into service contracts or provide proof of service or treatment participation as a condition of acceptance into the unit. If the meeting satisfies the housing provider's concerns, they do not need to proceed to the next step and may accept the participant immediately.

**Step 2 - Schedule a Case Conference:** If a participant's explanation does not satisfy the housing provider, prior to issuing a denial, the housing provider must first set up a case conference with the case conferencing group for the particular service hub the participant's housing offer originated from. The goal of the case conference is to leverage system partners to find solutions or other possible housing pathways for the participant, with the goal of either reversing the denial or finding another possible housing placement. The case conferencing group does not have the power to require the denying provider to accept the participant.

- The case conference group for health and safety denials will consist of the service hub's case conference group; 1-2 members from the Coordinated Entry Committee; and 1-2 members from the Regional Homeless Council.
- Case conferences will be triggered by the housing provider informing Maine Housing as the CE Operator of the health and safety denial. Maine Housing will activate the case conference.
- Case conferencing members will need to be available on an ad hoc basis to ensure efficiency, generally within three business days, but no more than five business days.
- Case conferences will be scheduled to allow most members to attend, but move forward without full attendance to promote swiftness in the CE referral process.
- The housing provider may deny a referral based on health or safety concerns if an alternative housing pathway or solution cannot be found through the above case conferencing.
- No rejection is ever permanent- the participant will remain on in the CE priority pool for future housing openings, including openings that originate with the denying project. The original housing provider who denied the referral will be asked to reconsider any changes in the applicant's exhibited behavior if the applicant is re-referred to a new opening the project administers.

Please note that the health and safety reason for denials should be used in the rarest of cases.

## Appendix A

### Maine Coordinated Entry (CE) Operator Role

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**Current Maine CE Operator:** Maine Housing

**Scope of Role:**

1. Establish day-to-day management structures. Includes:
  1. Working with stakeholders to monitor and ensure the CE system is in compliance with all HUD requirements
  2. Maintaining CE policies and procedures to ensure they are clear, updated and accessible to stakeholders, including any communication timelines and expectations between parties (i.e. Maine Housing will respond to send referrals for a vacancy in x business days).
2. Establish clear, accessible communication plans. Includes
  1. Structuring, facilitating and/or delegating case conferencing
  2. Implementing the below accountability mechanisms
3. Promotes, develops and trains on standardized assessment processes
4. Reports of CE participation by projects to the Project Monitoring Committee based on MCoC-approved monitoring criteria
5. Manages priority list (refresh, update)
6. Manages referral mechanism to vacant projects
7. Convenes stakeholders to frequently review and improve the CE process

**Accountability Mechanisms:**

- Provide the CE Steering committee with monthly reports on how the CE system is performing.
  - a. See next section for sample elements of a report
- Establish a frontline staff CE learning collaborative as a sub-committee of the CE Steering committee to incorporate real-time input into CE implementation.
- Create and distribute marketing and materials to stakeholders outside of the CE committee on how CE will work, how participants are affected, how CE is overseen, how suggestions can be made, and how decisions are made about changes to CE.
- Distribute clear appeals procedures for both participants and providers to use.
- Incorporate an anonymous avenue for providers to submit concerns or grievances to the CE Steering Committee

**Monthly Reporting Template (Sample)**

1. Compare our measures to how our system performed prior to CE implementation to evaluate where CE has improved and challenged our system.
2. Geographic coverage metrics
3. Utilization of CE- *how many assessed, how many placed, how many waiting*
4. Process measures- *time from assessment to referral; time from referral to program enrollment*
5. Prioritizing the most vulnerable- *scores and length of time homeless of program enrollments*
6. Sub-population focus of the above measures; equity overlay
7. Rate of housing program denials of participants
8. Reasons for housing program denials of participants
9. Challenges and successes of implementation (qualitative)

**Appendix B**

**MAINE Continuum of Care (MCoC) COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEM (MCES) & Service Hub**

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### Case Conferencing Release of Information

Agency Name: \_\_\_\_\_

This Agency is part of a group called the Maine Continuum of Care (MCoC) Coordinated Entry and Service Hub \_\_\_\_\_ which is a group of agencies working together to provide housing resources to people experiencing homelessness. A list of all member agencies in the MCoC and Service Hubs is available online at [www.mainehomelessplanning.org](http://www.mainehomelessplanning.org).

**Purpose:** The purpose of this form is to obtain consent to share your information at service hub case conferencing meetings and to place your name on the Service Hub By Name List (BNL). By doing this, Service Hub agencies will work to refer you to housing available through the Coordinated Entry System.

This form allows you to choose how information will be shared during case conferencing. Service Hub case conferencing is defined as meetings of Service Hub members to best match individuals experiencing homelessness to available resources. Case conferencing meetings will also use a By Name List, which is a comprehensive list of individuals who have been identified as experiencing homelessness in our community.

By signing this release, you allow MCES and Service Hub \_\_\_\_\_ member agencies to share information about you and your household. This helps agencies focus on your housing needs and work toward your household's identified goals.

You may decline to allow any of your information to be shared with other agencies. If you choose not to share your information, you and your household may have fewer housing opportunities through CES. You or your household will never be denied services if you decline to share information.

Case conferencing meetings will focus on how providers can best meet your needs and end your homelessness as quickly as possible, including providing outreach services to you and connecting you to housing resources. Types of information that might be shared on the By Name List during case conferencing meetings include:

- Personal identifying information for you and your household (examples: name, date of birth, gender, etc.)
- Past or current participation in other housing and supportive service programs
- Contact information
- Information about your military service and VA eligibility
- Housing history and housing status
- Household income, financial assistance and source(s)
- General disability information relevant to housing

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Printed Name of Participant) agree to share information with the Maine Service Hub \_\_\_\_\_ and MCES and its participating member agencies as detailed below.

***Please initial your preferred level of disclosure and participation in Service Hub Case Conferencing:***

\_\_\_\_\_ **Share my information:** I authorize \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Agency) to share the above listed information about me and my household members during case conferencing to determine eligibility for housing openings and connect me to other services, as applicable.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Share my information using a case number:** I authorize the agency listed above to share the following information about me and my household members during case conferencing: age bracket, veteran status, disability status, household size, length of time homeless and housing history. Instead of sharing my name during case conferencing, I understand that a case number will be utilized to identify me and my household members. \*

\_\_\_\_\_ **Do not share my information:** I do not wish to have any of the above listed information discussed at case conferencing. I understand that not authorizing the sharing of this information may limit participating agencies' ability to locate me and notify me of available openings.

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**\*PLEASE NOTE: PERSONS UTILIZING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESOURCE CENTERS AND ARE FLEEING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT AND/OR HUMAN TRAFFICKING WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE REFERRED BY CASE NUMBER, ASSIGNED BY THE VICTIM SERVICES AGENCY.**

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read, or have had read to you, all the information above and have chosen to sign this form voluntarily. Your signature also indicates you understand that:

- Participation in the MCEs does not guarantee you housing assistance
- Additional information and documentation may be required by an agency that is offering housing or supportive services before entering the housing or supportive services program
- This consent is valid for one (1) year from the effective date of your signature below
- You can cancel your consent any time by written request
- You have a right to request a copy of this consent form after you have signed it

Participant Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Representative Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Representative Relationship to Participant\*\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Representative Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Witness Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Witness Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Examples of authorized representative are: guardian, power of attorney and others as defined as law.

**For Agency Use only (please initial)**

\_\_\_\_\_ The participant above received a telephonic explanation of this form. On behalf of the participant, staff at this Agency served as the representative.

\_\_\_\_\_ The Consent was read in its entirety.

Appendix C

See Attached.

Appendix D

## Grievance and Appeal Policy and Procedure

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All participants and programs involved in the CES must be afforded the right to submit grievances against providers or the CES itself, and must be afforded the right to appeal decisions made by the providers or by CES. As a publicly supported process, the CES must also allow grievances from outside parties. This section will enumerate the processes by which grievances and/or appeals will follow.

In all cases, a grievance can encompass any aspect of the CES process with which the aggrieved participant or program is not satisfied. Every effort should be made to resolve grievances informally, before a formal grievance process is initiated. In the instances where the aggrieved party is dissatisfied with a decision made by a program or the CES, this dissatisfaction would amount to an appeal of that decision. While the terms are distinct, the process for addressing these is the same.

## Scope

These procedures shall address grievances and appeals of the CES itself. Any program or person who interacts with the Coordinated Entry System may file an appeal, regardless of whether or not the program or person is participating in the CES. Each participating program must have its own internal grievance and appeal process. In instances where the aggrieved party's complaint involves a program level decision, or the actions of a program staff, then that program's grievance and appeal policy shall be used. CES grievance and appeal procedures will be utilized when the complaint pertains to the one or more of the following:

- Access to Coordinated Entry System (i.e. participant encounters a barrier to CES Access)
- Assessment (e.g. no assessment provided)
- Prioritization (e.g. disagreement with housing designation)
- Housing referral (e.g. lack of follow through from housing provider)
- Other (please be specific)

The grievance may also pertain to actions or decisions of the CoC Project Coordinator, or the case conferencing group, in respect to the operation of the Coordinated Entry System. If it is uncertain whether the grievance is program related or system related, the Project Coordinator and a representative from the agency in question will make a determination. Participants are welcome to have an advocate, such as a caseworker, available to support them through the entirety of the process, if this is what they wish.

## Participant/Citizen grievance and appeal

### Step One Grievance/Appeal

Each participant will have the opportunity to resolve any complaints through an informal conversation, during which the aggrieved person will have an opportunity to express their concerns and have them addressed. This informal conversation should take place within 10 business days of the occurrence of the CES process in question. If a solution is unable to be reached, the participant will have the right to the official grievance and appeal process. Participants will be able to move right to the formal process, if that is what they wish.

If the party chooses to carry their grievance forward, at this point they shall complete a CES Grievance Form. This form will detail the nature of the grievance and include all supporting evidence for the grievance. The form shall be written in a manner that will allow people to complete and submit the form without assistance if necessary, but people may accept the assistance of a caseworker in completing and submitting the form as well. This form should be submitted within 10 business days of the informal conversation. The grieved party is welcome to submit any supporting written materials with the form, should they wish.

The completed CES Grievance Form will be transmitted to the coordinated entry email listserv at Maine Housing. A member of that listserv will then notify members of the appeal hearing pool that a grievance had been received. This appeal hearing pool will consist of all 9 Hub Coordinators and the tri-chairs of the CES committee. The appeal hearing meeting must occur within 10 business days of the CES Grievance Form being received. Appeals will be heard by two available Hub Coordinators and one CES Tri-Chair. Program participants will be given the opportunity to provide verbal testimony to the hearing group. A ten-minute time frame will be allowed to present the grievance or appeal directly to the group. The hearing group will specify the time and date for that testimony. The verbal testimony must be provided within the ten (10) business days hearing window.

In the case of an appeal, the original decision will be either upheld or overturned. In the case of other grievances, the grievance will be held to be either founded or unfounded. If founded, the Project Coordinator will consult with the MCOC Tri-Chairs to determine what corrective actions must be taken.

In all cases, the aggrieved party will be informed of the decision in writing within ten (10) business days of the filed grievance. The notice of decision will also include information about what next steps may occur. If the person is still dissatisfied with the decision, they may choose to escalate their grievance or appeal.

#### Step Two Grievance/ Appeal

In cases where the aggrieved party is not satisfied with the decision of the Step One process, they may escalate their grievance/appeal.

The party will send their Grievance Form, supporting evidence, and a copy of the Step One decision to the CoC Tri-Chairs within 10 business days of the Step One decision. The aggrieved person will be given the opportunity to provide verbal testimony to the hearing to the CoC Tri-Chairs. A ten-minute time frame will be allowed to present their grievance or appeal directly to the group. The CoC Tri-Chairs will specify the time and date for that testimony. The verbal testimony must be provided within the ten (10) day hearing window.

The Tri-Chairs shall consider the evidence and choose to either uphold or overturn the Step One decision. If the appeal involves an agency represented by one of the Tri-Chairs, that chair shall recuse (himself) from the process. This decision must be rendered within 10 business days of the Step Two process being initiated. The aggrieved party will be informed of this decision in writing. All decisions at this stage are considered final.

## Program Grievance vs CES

In the case of a program wishing to lodge a grievance against the CES, a similar process shall be followed. This process is to address interagency concerns; a program may not use this process to file a grievance or appeal on behalf of an individual participant.

### Step One Grievance/Appeal

The aggrieved agency shall compose a formal letter that details the nature of the grievance or appeal, and include all supporting evidence. This letter and evidence shall be sent to the CES Committee Chairs. In the case that the grievance involves a CES Chair's agency, the complaint will be forwarded to the CoC Tri-Chairs, who will then hear the appeal.

The complaint and supporting evidence will be considered by the appropriate group as detailed above, who will render a decision within 30 days. The group hearing the appeal will also make any decision on corrective actions if necessary. This group will notify the aggrieved agency in writing as soon as a decision is made, as well as what next steps may occur.

### Step Two Grievance/Appeal

If the aggrieved agency is not satisfied with the decision of the Step One group, they may choose to escalate the complaint to Step Two. The agency must submit a Step Two complaint within 30 days of receiving notice of the Step One decision.

A Step Two agency complaint will be sent to the CoC Board President. It will take the form of a formal letter detailing the initial grievance or appeal, supporting evidence, and a copy of the Step One decision.

The Step Two complaint will be considered by the CoC Board at their next regular meeting. If the complaint is received less than five (5) business days prior to the next meeting, the Board may opt to defer the consideration until the following meeting. Any members of the Board whose agencies are involved in the complaint will recuse themselves from the process. The Board shall render a decision, and determine any corrective action if necessary. This will be communicated with all involved parties within five (5) working days of the meeting. All decisions at this level are considered final.

## Recordkeeping

The CoC Project Coordinator shall keep records of all CES grievances/appeals, and their results. Those records shall be forwarded to the Evaluation Entity, the CES Committee, CoC or CoC Board at their request. Records of grievances and appeals shall be kept without participant PII; only aggregate data with unique identifiers will be kept to preserve participant confidentiality. As part of the regular quarterly reporting, the CE Operator will present the number and disposition of all appeals and grievances to the CE Committee, as well as the CoC and CoC Board.

## Affirmative Outreach

All participants in the Coordinated Entry System must be made aware of their rights to file grievances and appeal CES decisions. CES will provide all CES participating providers with language that can be included in existing outreach documentation, and/or outreach materials. Information about CES grievances and appeals can be posted publicly at CES access points, or given directly to the participant upon their initial assessment.

## Appendix E

Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing), the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDV), and the Maine Continuum of Care (CoC) recognize the highly sensitive nature of information gathered from individuals experiencing domestic abuse and violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. These groups have worked together to develop protocols to ensure that the Victim Service Providers (VSPs – also known as Domestic Violence Resource Centers (DVRCs)) and their clients are included in the Coordinated Entry/Assessment process while adhering to the strict confidentiality requirements mandated by federal laws protecting victims of domestic abuse and violence.

Housing referrals from the DVRCs will be handled differently by the Hub Coordinators and the CES team.

DA&V clients will be given one Assessment score at entry.

If a client meets with a non-DVRC and wants referral to a DVRC for continued service, they may request this and a warm referral may be completed.

After the Assessment is completed, a client will be assigned an Empower ID number.

They will then be assigned a CES ID Number by the DVRC submitting this form.

Numbers should be created as such:

DVRC012022 – to identify the DVRC name, the number the client is in that DVRC's list, and the year submitted to the list (for instance, a client working in Hub 6 might have an ID of SV022022 meaning that Safe Voices worked with that client, they are the 2<sup>nd</sup> client from SV to enter the list, and it was 2022 when they were entered)

This form should be completed for inclusion to the QBNL/Prioritization List.

There are 3 ways this can happen, depending on what the client's wishes are (must be backed up with a signed, time limited release of information form):

1> full identification

2> partial identification

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3> anonymity

When the Hub Coordinator determines that a DVRC referral is the next appropriate match for available housing resources, the referring agency and housing provider will coordinate services using a time-limited release of information.

This form may also be used by any provider not participating in Maine HMIS for inclusion onto the QBNL/Prioritization List. This includes Youth, non-HMIS users, Veterans, and those who have concerns about their personal information being in a semi-public venue.

Client Unique Identifying Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Is this Assessment Score for a Family  or Individual  ?

If Family, number in family? \_\_\_\_\_

Program entry date \_\_\_\_\_

Assessment complete date \_\_\_\_\_

Is the Client or Head of Household a (check all that apply)

Disabled  Chronically Homeless  Veteran

Hub number: \_\_\_\_\_

DVRC Advocate Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Grantee SF-424's and Certification(s)

DocuSign Envelope ID: F5CA2AAB-A8F5-42CB-8889-B1CD7CB8971A

## STATE CERTIFICATIONS

In accordance with the applicable statutes and the regulations governing the consolidated plan regulations, the State certifies that:

**Affirmatively Further Fair Housing** – The State will affirmatively further fair housing.

**Uniform Relocation Act and Anti-displacement and Relocation Plan** – It will comply with the acquisition and relocation requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, (42 U.S.C. 4601-4655) and implementing regulations at 49 CFR Part 24. It has in effect and is following a residential anti-displacement and relocation assistance plan required under 24 CFR Part 42 in connection with any activity assisted with funding under the Community Development Block Grant or HOME programs.

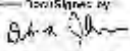
**Anti-Lobbying** – To the best of the State's knowledge and belief:

1. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of it, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement;
2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, it will complete and submit Standard Form-L.L.L., "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions; and
3. It will require that the language of paragraphs 1 and 2 of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

**Authority of State** – The submission of the consolidated plan is authorized under State law and the State possesses the legal authority to carry out the programs under the consolidated plan for which it is seeking funding, in accordance with applicable HUD regulations.

**Consistency with plan** – The housing activities to be undertaken with Community Development Block Grant, HOME, Emergency Solutions Grant, and Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS funds are consistent with the strategic plan in the State's consolidated plan.

**Section 3** – It will comply with section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968 (12 U.S.C. 1701u) and implementing regulations at 24 CFR Part 75.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Official

5/9/2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Director Office of Community Development

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

### **Specific Community Development Block Grant Certifications**

The State certifies that:

**Citizen Participation** -- It is following a detailed citizen participation plan that satisfies the requirements of 24 CFR §91.115 and each unit of general local government that receives assistance from the State is following a detailed citizen participation plan that satisfies the requirements of 24 CFR §570.486.

#### **Consultation with Local Governments --**

1. It has consulted with affected units of local government in the nonentitlement area of the State in determining the method of distribution of funding;
2. It engages in or will engage in planning for community development activities;
3. It provides or will provide technical assistance to units of local government in connection with community development programs; and
4. It will not refuse to distribute funds to any unit of general local government on the basis of the particular eligible activity selected by the unit of general local government to meet its community development needs, except that a State is not prevented from establishing priorities in distributing funding on the basis of the activities selected.

**Local Needs Identification** -- It will require each unit of general local government to be funded to identify its community development and housing needs, including the needs of low-income and moderate-income families, and the activities to be undertaken to meet these needs.

**Community Development Plan** -- Its consolidated plan identifies community development and housing needs and specifies both short-term and long-term community development objectives that have been developed in accordance with the primary objective of the CDBG program (i.e., the development of viable urban communities, by providing decent housing and expanding economic opportunities, primarily for persons of low and moderate income) and requirements of 24 CFR Parts 91 and 570.

**Use of Funds** -- It has complied with the following criteria:

1. **Maximum Feasible Priority.** With respect to activities expected to be assisted with CDBG funds, it has developed its Action Plan so as to give maximum feasible priority to activities which benefit low and moderate income families or aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight. The Action Plan may also include activities which the grantee certifies are designed to meet other community development needs having particular urgency because existing conditions pose a serious and immediate threat to the health or welfare of the community, and other financial resources are not available.
2. **Overall Benefit.** In the aggregate, not less than 70 percent of the CDBG funds, including Section 108 guaranteed loans, received by the State during the following fiscal year(s) 2024 [a period designated by the State of one, two, or three specific consecutive fiscal year(s)] will be used for activities that benefit persons of low and moderate income.

















































