



Notice of Funding Availability for The Student Homelessness Prevention Pilot

SCHEDULE

Issued: October 3, 2024

Proposals Due: October 31, 2024 5:00PM Local Time

MaineHousing Contact Person: Lauren Bustard

E-mail: studenthomelessnessrfp@mainehousing.org

NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE:

Maine State Housing Authority (“MaineHousing”) does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, age, familial status or receipt of public assistance in the admission or access to or treatment in its programs and activities. In employment, MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, age, physical or mental disability or genetic information. MaineHousing will provide appropriate communication auxiliary aids and services upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing will also provide this document in alternative formats upon sufficient notice. MaineHousing has designated the following person responsible for coordinating compliance with applicable federal and state nondiscrimination requirements and addressing grievances: Lauren Bustard, Maine State Housing Authority, 26 Edison Drive, Augusta, Maine 04330, Telephone Number 1-800-452-4668 (voice in state only), (207) 626-4600 (voice) or Maine Relay 711.

I. PURPOSE OF THIS NOTICE

Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing) is an independent quasi-state agency. The mission of MaineHousing is to assist Maine people in obtaining and maintaining quality affordable housing and services suitable to their housing needs. Additional information concerning MaineHousing can be found at www.mainehousing.org.

The Student Homelessness Prevention Pilot (“Program”) was established by 2024 Public Law Chapter 643, Section KKKK-1. 30-A MRSA c. 201, sub-chapter 14, and was funded with \$2 million to allow MaineHousing to create a program that provides housing subsidies directly to families of homeless students.

Successful Applicants will be funded to hire a Homelessness Prevention and Housing Navigation Specialist position who will provide services designed to either assist the student/family in maintaining current housing or in obtaining new housing that meets their needs. These services will fall within Homelessness Prevention/Diversion and/or Housing Navigation and Stabilization. Direct Financial Assistance Payments may also be provided to families. Please see Program Description attached as **Appendix C** for more detailed information regarding the Program.

Student Homelessness Prevention Pilot funds may be used for the following activities:

- to hire a Homelessness Prevention and Housing Navigation Specialist (or subcontract out to a service provider) to provide diversion, housing navigation and housing stability services; and
- to provide direct financial assistance to a student’s family to cover expenses that will help them maintain their current housing or obtain new housing. This assistance is flexible to best meet the needs of the family. Ongoing rental assistance for current or newly established housing must not exceed six months of payments.

This Notice of Funding Availability (“Notice”) seeks applicants to administer the Program in their School Administrative Unit (SAU) or as a collaborative effort of multiple SAUs. MaineHousing will disburse funding to the designated lead SAUs, collect data on use of funds, and monitor and report on Program outcomes.

II. POPULATION TO BE ASSISTED

Assistance may be provided to students and their families who meet the criteria under the Maine Department of Education definition in [Title 20-A, Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 1, Definitions, 13-A](#).

13-A. Homeless student. "Homeless student" means a person eligible to attend elementary or secondary school pursuant to [section 5201](#) who:

A. Lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence;

B-1. Is a child or a youth:

(1) Who is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship or a similar reason; is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or camping ground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodation; is living in an emergency or transitional shelter; is abandoned in a hospital; or is awaiting foster care placement;

(2) Who is living in a car, park or public space or in an abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station or similar setting;

(3) Who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; and

(4) Who is a migratory child, as defined in Section 1309 of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, who qualifies as homeless for the purpose of this chapter because the child is living in circumstances described in this section.

III. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Funding will be available to Maine School Administrative Units (SAUs) as defined by [20-A M.R.S. §1\(26\)](#) and Education in Unorganized Territory (EUT). Multiple SAUs/EUT may join together to submit a collaborative application, but the application must be submitted by a lead SAU that agrees to act as the fiscal agent for the project. Applicants may choose to subcontract to a nonprofit organization to provide services to eligible students and their families.

In the interest of assuring that these funds reach as many of Maine's McKinney-Vento students as possible, MaineHousing will give priority consideration to Applicants (single SAUs/EUT or collaboratives) that have identified an average of 50 or more homeless students in the past two (2) school years (2023-2024, 2022-2023).

IV. REQUIREMENTS

Scope of Services:

- Identify/hire a Homelessness Prevention and Housing Navigation Specialist ("Specialist"). This service may be sub-contracted to a local homeless service provider. Full year contracts must be offered to these Specialists.
- The Specialist will identify eligible student households and assist them in either maintaining current housing or obtaining new permanent housing by providing housing navigation services and direct financial assistance. Specialists will work collaboratively with service providers in student households area's Homeless Service Hub (Homeless Service Hub information and contact information for Hub Coordinators provided in **Appendix D**) to provide referrals to those services which will support student households in maintaining housing stability.
- The Specialist will track eligible expenditures on a monthly basis and maintain supporting documentation to verify these expenditures.
- The Specialist will report monthly on participants served and grant funds expended.
- The Specialist and their supervisor must participate in information sharing/training sessions as requested by MaineHousing.

V. TERM OF CONTRACT

Any contract awarded pursuant to this Notice will be for a term beginning as early as feasible after the award of the contract and will end one year following the effective date. MaineHousing will have the sole right and option to extend the contract for additional terms up to one year, with the total term not to exceed three (3) years.

VI. FORMAT AND DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

All Applicants must submit the following, in PDF format, to studenthomelessnessrfp@mainehousing.org

1. Narrative, including:
 - a. Applicant's Experience providing services to students meeting the definition of homelessness cited above.
 - b. Approximate number of Students/Households to be Served
 - c. Staffing Plan – where the Homeless Prevention and Housing Navigation Specialist will be sited, how supervision will be carried out, potential caseload, etc.
 - d. Services to be provided, including information on partner organizations who will be collaborating on the project to provide additional support to student households.
 - e. Total Funding Request. An annual operating budget should be included as Appendix F.
 - f. Description of how the Applicant's financial management system meets the following requirement: An Applicant's financial management systems must be sufficient to permit the tracking of these grant funds and any expenditures allowable under the award, and the expenditures must be supported by backup documentation showing the amounts expensed and proof of payment.
2. Applicant Information Sheet in Appendix A.
3. Applicant Certification Form in Appendix B.

All applications must be submitted electronically to Lauren Bustard, Senior Director of Homeless Initiatives, by email at studenthomelessnessrfp@mainehousing.org, no later than 5:00 p.m. local time on October 31, 2024. Please include in the subject line of the email "Response to Notice of Funding Availability for Student Homelessness Prevention Pilot."

Questions concerning this Notice must be directed to the email as noted above no later than 5:00pm on October 18, 2024. Responses will be posted to the MaineHousing webpage for the Notice on a regular basis, and responses to all questions will be posted by Tuesday, October 22, 2024.

VII. SELECTION CRITERIA

Submissions will be reviewed and evaluated by a scoring team based on its assessment of each Applicant's capacity to meet the Scope of Services outlined herein. Upon such review, MaineHousing may schedule interviews with select Applicants. Any contract awarded by MaineHousing will be based on applications deemed by the scoring team to be most advantageous, taking into account the ability to begin services expeditiously, the number of student households to be served, the services provided, the cost (based on the number of people served) and collaboration with local homeless service providers.

VIII. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Rights Reserved by MaineHousing

In addition to the rights reserved by MaineHousing elsewhere in this Notice, MaineHousing reserves the right to:

Adjust the timetable for this Notice as deemed necessary.

Waive informalities and minor irregularities in proposals received.

Reject and not consider any or all Applicants who do not meet the requirements of this Notice, including but not limited to incomplete responses and/or non-responsive proposals.

Reject any or all proposals received and not to award a contract pursuant to this Notice, or to cancel or terminate this Notice process at any time, whether before or after any proposals have been submitted or received, if deemed by MaineHousing to be in its best interest.

Negotiate price or other factors included in any proposal submitted to MaineHousing, and in the event MaineHousing is unable to negotiate a mutually satisfactory contract with the successful Applicant under this Notice, MaineHousing may, in its sole discretion, negotiate with another Applicant or cancel this Notice and not award a contract to any Applicant.

Reject the Applicant selected pursuant to this Notice and to offer a contract to another Applicant in the event the selected Applicant does not enter into the required contract to provide related services described in this Notice.

Negotiate directly with one Applicant if the responses to this Notice demonstrate a lack of competition.

Correct or amend this Notice. In no case will this Notice be amended within seven (7) days of the proposal submission deadline unless the amendment includes an extension of time. MaineHousing will not be liable for any costs incurred as a result of changes to this Notice.

Other Terms and Conditions

Conflict of Interest. The Applicant, any principal or affiliate of the Applicant, or anyone who will be paid for work on the Contract, that has business ties, familial relations, or other close personal relations with a current MaineHousing employee or a commissioner, or anyone who was a MaineHousing employee or a commissioner within the past year must disclose this information under **Appendix A - Applicant Information Sheet**.

Applicant Certification Form. As a mandatory requirement of this proposal, **all** Applicants must complete and submit the Applicant Certification Form attached to this Notice as **Appendix B**, along with their proposal submission.

Confidentiality and Nondisclosure. Applicant shall maintain in trust and confidence and shall not disclose to any third party, except as such disclosure may be authorized in writing in advance by MaineHousing, and shall not use for any unauthorized purpose, any and all information, documents and data received or obtained from or on behalf of MaineHousing. Applicant may use such information, documents and data only to the extent required for the purposes described in this Notice. Applicant shall adhere to all security, confidentiality and nondisclosure policies and procedures required by MaineHousing for the protection of such information and data from unauthorized use and disclosure and from loss.

Maine Freedom of Access Act. Information submitted by an Applicant in any proposal becomes public information, and is subject to disclosure in accordance with the requirements of law, including without limitation the Maine Freedom of Access Act, 1 M.R.S. Section 401 et seq. ("FOAA"), except as provided therein. Applicant acknowledges that MaineHousing is required to comply with FOAA.

Protest Procedures. Protests of any award made pursuant to this Notice must be submitted in writing to MaineHousing at the address given on the cover page of this Notice, to the attention of: Director. To be considered, protests must be received by MaineHousing within fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of notification of the contract award and provide specific reasons and any supporting documentation for the protest.

Women and Minority Owned Businesses. Women and minority owned businesses are encouraged to apply. To subcontract any of the work, Applicant must follow the steps outlined in 2 CFR 200.321.

APPENDIX A

APPLICANT INFORMATION SHEET

for

MaineHousing Notice of Funding Availability for The Student Homelessness
Prevention Pilot

Please provide the following information, completed and signed, and place this form at the front of the application:

General Information	
Applicant Name:	
Federal Tax ID:	
Street Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Telephone#:	
Homeless Service Hub Where District is Located (See Appendix D.)	
List of Partnering Organizations and Role in Program	
Contact Person for Questions	
Name:	
Title:	
E-mail Address:	
Telephone#:	

Description of Capacity	
Summarized Narrative of Applicant's ability to provide the services required under this Notice	
List of planned resources to be assigned to meet the obligations of this Notice	
Conflict of Interest. Does the Applicant, any principal or affiliate of the Applicant, or anyone who will be paid for work on the contract have business ties, familial relations, or other close personal relations with a current MaineHousing employee or commissioner, or anyone who was a MaineHousing employee or commissioner within the past year? If yes, please describe here:	
Total Funding Request	

APPENDIX B

APPLICANT CERTIFICATION FORM

for

MaineHousing Notice of Funding Availability for The Student Homelessness
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Applicant Name	
Applicant Address	

The undersigned Applicant represents and certifies as follows:

1. The prices in this Application have been arrived at independently and without consultation, communication, agreement or disclosure with or to any other Applicant or potential Applicant.
2. No attempt has been made at any time to induce any firm or person to submit any intentionally high or noncompetitive Application or to otherwise submit or refrain from submitting an Application for the purpose of restricting competition.
3. Applicant has not given, and will not give at any time hereafter, any economic opportunity, future employment, gift, loan, gratuity, special discount, trip, favor, or service to any employee or representative of MaineHousing in connection with this Notice.
4. Applicant acknowledges that MaineHousing will determine whether a conflict of interest exists and that MaineHousing reserves the right to disqualify any Applicant on the grounds of actual or apparent conflict of interest.
5. Applicant has not employed or retained any person or entity to solicit or obtain any contract resulting from this Notice and has not paid or agreed to pay to any person or entity any commission, percentage, brokerage, or other fee contingent upon or resulting from the award of any such contract.
6. Applicant understands and acknowledges that the representations in its Application are material and important and will be relied on by MaineHousing in evaluating the Application. Applicant certifies that, to the best of its knowledge, all of the information contained in its Application is true, correct and complete and acknowledges that any intentional misrepresentation by Applicant will disqualify Applicant from further consideration in connection with this Notice.
7. The undersigned individual is legally authorized to sign this Applicant Certification Form for and on behalf of Applicant and to bind Applicant to the statements made herein.

Name, Title and Signature of Individual with Authority to Bind Applicant	
Name	
Title	
Signature	
Date	

APPENDIX C

Student Homelessness Prevention Pilot

Purpose

This Student Homelessness Prevention Pilot (the “Program”) will serve to:

1. Divert students and their families from entering the shelter system by helping them identify alternate housing solutions and connecting them to the services and financial assistance they need to remain stably housed.
2. Provide housing navigation and stabilization services to assist students and their families in obtaining and maintaining stable permanent housing.

Eligible Grantees

Funding will be provided to school districts (“Grantees”). Grantees may elect to subcontract with a nonprofit service provider to implement the Program.

Program Participant Eligibility

Assistance may be provided to students and their families who meet the criteria under the Maine Department of Education definition in [Title 20-A, Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 1, Definitions, 13-A](#).

13-A. Homeless student. "Homeless student" means a person eligible to attend elementary or secondary school pursuant to [section 5201](#) who:

A. Lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence;

B-1. Is a child or a youth:

- (1) Who is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship or a similar reason; is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park or camping ground due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodation; is living in an emergency or transitional shelter; is abandoned in a hospital; or is awaiting foster care placement;
- (2) Who is living in a car, park or public space or in an abandoned building, substandard housing, bus or train station or similar setting;
- (3) Who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; and
- (4) Who is a migratory child, as defined in Section 1309 of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, who qualifies as homeless for the purpose of this chapter because the child is living in circumstances described in this section.

Program Description

Grantees will be funded to hire a Homelessness Prevention and Housing Navigation Specialist position who will provide services designed to either assist the student/family in maintaining current housing or in obtaining new housing that meets their needs. These services will fall within Homelessness Prevention/Diversion and/or Housing Navigation and Stabilization. Direct Financial Assistance Payments may also be provided to families, based on the guidelines below.

Homelessness Prevention:

Homelessness Diversion is an intervention designed to immediately address the needs of someone who is at imminent risk of losing their housing or someone who has just lost their housing and become homeless. Diversion is a client-driven approach; its goal is to help the person or household find safe alternative housing immediately, rather than entering shelter or experiencing unsheltered homelessness. It is intended to ensure that the homelessness experience is as brief as possible, to prevent unsheltered homelessness, and to avert stays in shelter. Diversion should not be a mechanism for denying access to available shelter, but rather one for finding a better alternative than shelter or the street.

The idea is to assist the client in retaining or accessing a safe housing alternative. Some of these options may include:

- a negotiated stay at or return to their previous housing;
- short-term, non-shelter accommodation;
- apartments or homes, (including shared housing);
- returns to family.

The core components of a Diversion program are a Rapid Resolution problem-solving approach to conversations with individuals experiencing a housing crisis paired with access to flexible funding that supports creative solutions to keep people housed or create new housing options.

Some examples of this financial assistance may include, but are not limited to:

- Mediation costs
- Utility deposits, payments and arrears
- Rental arrears and assistance
- Rental application fees
- Security deposits
- Moving Costs

Housing Navigation and Stabilization Services:

The three core components of providing these services are landlord engagement, pre-tenancy supports for students and their families, and housing stability services.

- The goal of landlord engagement is to develop partnerships with landlords and property managers in a geographic area to increase participant access to housing units. Activities include recruiting local landlords and negotiating with them to help participants access housing that is desirable and sustainable over time within the participant's resources.
- Pre-tenancy supports provide support to students and their families in identifying their housing goals and barriers, working with them on housing search and rental applications, and helping them through the leasing process.
- Housing stability services assist participating families in overcoming any challenges that arise during the first year of tenancy and ensuring that families remain stably housed.

Direct Financial Assistance:

Direct financial assistance may be made to a student's family to cover expenses that will help them maintain their current housing or obtain new housing. This assistance is flexible to best meet the needs of the family. Ongoing rental assistance for current or newly established housing must not exceed six months of payments.

General Program Requirements:

In addition to carrying out the activities outlined above, Homelessness Prevention and Housing Navigation Specialists will be required to participate in MaineHousing-sponsored training and a Community of Practice Group that will support the sharing of best practices and brainstorming of solutions to Program challenges. Grantees will also be responsible for the fiscal and Program outcome reporting described below.

Performance Benchmarks:

The effectiveness of the Program will ultimately be determined based on a Grantee's ability to accomplish the following goals:

- To assist students and their families in remaining in their current housing or identifying a safe alternative rather than entering a shelter or facing unsheltered homelessness
- To increase the number of units available to participating families through the engagement of additional landlords and property managers
- To reduce the length of time families spend homeless/in precarious housing situations
- To successfully lease families in permanent housing

Evaluation of the Program will be based on the following data points:

- Number of families served
- Number of families successfully diverted from homelessness
- Number of landlords/property managers leasing units to participating families
- % of households moving into permanent housing

Goals for Program effectiveness include:

- 30% of currently housed families diverted from homelessness
- 50% of currently unhoused participants exit Program into permanent housing

Reporting Requirements:

Program Outcome Reporting:

Grantees will report quarterly on the following:

Families served: demographics of family members, including race/ethnicity, age, and income

Families diverted from homelessness

Families leased

New landlords recruited

Brief de-identified narrative of families' barriers to getting housed

Brief narrative of promising approaches/best practice

MaineHousing will provide a reporting spreadsheet to be submitted quarterly, due 30 days after the close of the calendar month.

Fiscal Reporting:

Grantees will be required to submit quarterly reporting on grant funds expended, utilizing a form provided by MaineHousing that identifies the type of direct financial assistance provided to families. Reporting will be due 30 days after the close of the calendar month.

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APPENDIX D

INFORMATION ON HOMELESS SERVICE HUBS

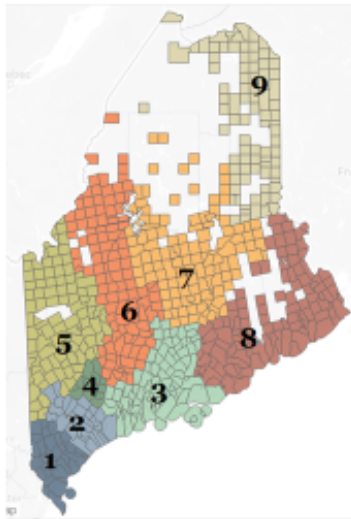
for

MaineHousing Notice of Funding Availability for The Student Homelessness Prevention Pilot

REGIONAL HOMELESS SYSTEM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

The nine Homeless Service Hubs operate from a framework from which coordination of activities such as provider training, coordination, referrals and distribution of housing resources can be efficiently deployed. This new structure allows homeless service providers to effectively implement the new Coordinated Entry System, standardize training, engage other mainstream systems such as justice and healthcare and remove access barriers for individuals seeking support. Coordinated Entry is a consistent, streamlined process for accessing the resources available in the homeless crisis response system. Through Coordinated Entry, a Continuum of Care (CoC) ensures that the highest need, most vulnerable households in the community are prioritized for services and that the housing and supportive services in the system are used as efficiently and effectively as possible. Each Homeless Service Hub determines its own governance structure and process for system engagement, but with commitment to similar driving principles of person-centered care.

Maine Homeless Response System
Service Hub Structure



- 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

Hub	Hub Coordinator Name	Hub Coordinator Organization	Email	Phone
1	Abigail Smallwood	York County Community Action Corporation	abigail.smallwood@yccac.org	207-502-9415
2	Nakesha Warren-Colbry	United Way of Southern Maine	nwarrencolbry@uwsme.org	207-347-2345
3	Jeffrey Cosgrove-Cook	United Way of Southern Maine	jeffcc@uwmcm.org	207-443-9752
4	Julia Kimball	Lewiston Housing Authority	jkimball@lewistonhousing.org	207-240-8265
5	Emily Meade	Western Maine Community Action	emeade@wmca.org	207-860-4469
6	Nicole Frydrych	Volunteers of America Northern New England	nicole.frydrych@voanne.org	207-751-8288
7	Jen Weatherbee	Community Health and Counseling Services	jlweatherbee@chcs-me.org	207-922-4600 ext. 6403
8	Jace Farris	Community Health and Counseling Services	jfarris@chcs-me.org	207-922-4600 ext. 6101
9	Shelby Wilson	Presque Isle Housing Authority	swilson@pihousing.org	207-768-8231

APPENDIX E

KEY PROPOSAL DATES

for

MaineHousing Notice of Funding Availability for The Student Homelessness
Prevention Pilot

All dates are subject to change at MaineHousing’s discretion. All proposal documents, correspondence, and/or questions must be emailed to: studenthomelessnessrfp@mainehousing.org

Notice Issuance:	
Date Issued:	<u>October 3, 2024</u>
Questions & Answers:	
Questions:	Questions will be received: Until: <u>October 18, 2024 no later than 5 p.m. EST</u> Questions must be emailed directly to: studenthomelessnessrfp@mainehousing.org
Answers:	All questions, and their subsequent answers, will be posted on the MaineHousing website for public viewing. Questions will be answered no later than <u>October 22, 2024</u> <i>To locate these postings, go to the MaineHousing website located at:</i> https://www.mainehousing.org/rfp
Pertinent Proposal Dates:	
Deadline for Proposal Submission:	<u>October 31, 2024</u> , no later than 5:00 p.m. EST <i>**Please be sure emailed proposal is in PDF format, as well as all supplemental documentation.</i>
Proposal Evaluation Review and Demonstration Phase:	From: <u>November 1 - 15, 2024</u>
Contract Offering:	<u>Week of November 18, 2024</u>