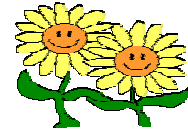




MWDA Newsletter



Volume 3 Issue 1

March 5, 2002

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Maine Welfare Director's Web Site

Maine Welfare Director's now have their own web site. The address (link) is www.mainewelfaredirectors.org

CCNET, a web hosting agency located in West Bath has donated the cost of hosting the web site. The only cost for MWDA is the domain registration fee (\$40.00 for 2 years). On the site you will find the current newsletter, membership list, list of Board of Directors, and the current by-laws. Minutes, a meeting schedule and membership certification will be added in the near

Maine Welfare Director's Association

Dedicated to the Purpose of establishing and promoting good, efficient and standardized Welfare Administration

- [Bylaws](#)
- [Board of Directors](#)
- [Membership](#)
- [Membership List](#)
- [Minutes](#)
- [Newsletter](#)
- [Meeting Schedule](#)

future. If you have suggestions of other items you would like to have added to the site please e-mail me at webmail@mainewelfaredirectors.org or jhardygoddard@lisbonme.org or call me at 353-3000 ext. 124

Court Upholds Maine's Medicaid Waiver

On 2/25/02, the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C., ruled against the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturer Association (PhRMA) suit to stop implementation of the groundbreaking Healthy Maine Prescription program. The program, authorized last spring by the Maine Legislature,

requires pharmaceutical manufacturers to provide medications for people without prescription drug insurance coverage at the same discounts provided to Medicaid recipients.

PhRMA had sued the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to overturn waivers HHS has issued to Maine and Ver-

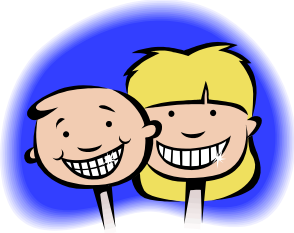
mont to allow the drug discounts.



Healthy Maine Prescriptions Program serves 110,000 Maine people

Twas the Day Before Christmas **By Brenda Harrington**

Twas the day before Christmas
When all through City Hall
Not a voice could be heard
Through the General Assistance wall.



As the last client's tale stayed fresh in her head
She typed away the narrative to stay complaint with the feds
And then for a bit she fiddled with her hair
In hopes that her client soon would be there

When out in the driveway there arose such a clatter
She sprang from her desk to see what was the matter
Away to her window she flew like a flash
Tore open the curtains and threw up the sash

And what to her wondering eyes did appear
But a brand new Explorer with 8 kids in the rear
With a lovely young driver, so lively and quick
She knew in that moment it must be Miss Nick

More rapid than eagles her children they came
Miss Nick screamed and hollered and called them by name
Now Amy, now Cathy, now Johnnie, now Rick
Now Willy and Walter, and Becky and Dick

To the door of the building
To the waiting room floor
Get your little butts in there
I can't stand this no more.



As the toys in the toy box suddenly flew through the air
It was then that I noticed, Miss Nick didn't care
She stood there a screaming with her hands at her hip
Then banged at the door stating get me in quick!

She was dressed in designer clothing from head to foot
But her 8 little kiddies were all covered in soot
She asked for some gas and also some food
And I knew at that moment Miss Nick was quite rude

Twas the Day Before Christmas (cont.)

I asked where she worked
She admitted she'd quit
She showed up late
And her boss had a fit

Her husband was home
And hadn't worked in a week
She said he was lazy
And she called him a creep

The kids played rough on the waiting room floor
And continued to slam the outside door
I got all their ages from 1 to 8
While Miss Nick rudely stated "Coming here's a mistake"

The kids were hungry
They had nothing to eat
Her food stamps were gone
In less than a week

The little ones were eligible
For food right away
But she and her husband
Must work every day

She grunted and snorted
And called me some names
Wouldn't sign the application
And said I played games

She slammed out my office
Screaming loudly once more
Dragging 8 little kiddies
Out the General Assistance Door

And I heard her exclaim
As she tore out of sight
Merry Christmas to you
Have yourself a great night! (Snarl when you say this)

Finish each day and be
done with it. You have
done what you could.
Some blunders and
absurdities no doubt
crept in; forget them as
soon as you can.
Tomorrow is a new
day; begin it well and
serenely and with too
high a spirit to be
encumbered with your
old nonsense.

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson ~



FEMA Grants Awarded

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded \$485,125 in grants to provide emergency food and shelter to those in need. The funds are part of \$140 million being distributed to approximately 11,000 non-profit organizations across the country.

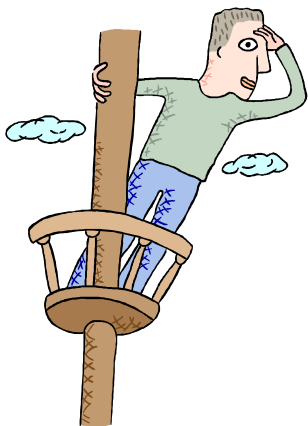
These grants are funded under FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program, which since 1983 has provided support for thousands of non-profit and local government agencies across the nation to help feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and prevent hunger and homelessness from occurring

The following county and state awards are funded :

* Androscoggin County.....	\$45,020
* Aroostook County.....	\$33,372
* Cumberland County.....	\$59,445
* Franklin County.....	\$20,544
* Kennebec County.....	\$48,338
* Knox County.....	\$11,304
* Oxford County.....	\$30,054
* Penobscot County.....	\$64,360
* Piscataquis County.....	\$12,385
* Somerset County.....	\$35,903
* Waldo County.....	\$18,308
* Washington County.....	\$26,958
* State of Maine Set-Aside Committee.....	\$79,134



Additional jurisdictions in Maine may be selected at a later date by the Emergency Food and Shelter Set-Aside Committee.



Position Needed

The nominating committee is seeking a member for the position of Second Vice President. Voting will take place at the Spring Seminar and you will take office on July 1st. If you are looking to become more involved in the Maine Welfare Director's Association this is a perfect opportunity for you. If you have questions pertaining to this position please contact a committee member.

Judy Hardy-Goddard	353-3000 ext. 124	Steve Wood	375-4331
Donna Staples	377-7207	Martha Huff	929-8552
Warren Hatch	563-5168		



Resolutions

1. Throw out non-essential numbers. This includes age, weight and height.
2. Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down. If you really need a grouch, there are probably family members that fill that need.
3. Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Just never let the brain idle.
4. Enjoy the simple things. When the children are young, that is all that you can afford. When they are in college, that is all that you can afford. When they are grown, and you are on retirement, that is all that you can afford!
5. Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. Laugh so much that you can be tracked in the store by your distinctive laughter.
6. The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves.
7. Surround yourself with what you love, whether it is family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
8. Cherish your health. If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
9. Don't take guilt trips. Go to the mall, the next county, a foreign country, but not guilt.
10. Tell the people you love, that you love them, at every opportunity. Remember, life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

Smile, it's the cheapest face-lift around!

Cryptogram

General Assistance Purpose (answer on back page)

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From the Desk of Cindy Boyd

General Assistance

I recently compiled the year-end reports for General Assistance. Even though the fiscal year ended June 30th, the reports could not be compiled until after September 30th. The reason that we had to wait until after September 30th is that municipalities can take up to 90 days from the end of their reporting period to request reimbursement. Whether a municipality elects to submit a report for reimbursement monthly, quarterly, or semi-annually, the Department shall refuse to accept and pay the claims that are not submitted within 90 days unless there is good cause for not submitting timely. This is addressed in 22MRSAS4311(3) and on page 38 of the DHS policy. When you request good cause, please send a letter explaining the reason the reports are late. If you submit a report and it is late and there is not a letter requesting good cause included, the office will either call you or send you a letter requesting a good letter.

This year when it came time to prepare the year-end report we were going through a staffing change. Leigh Cotnoir left to work at Motor Vehicle and we had to request a register to fill her position. We were lucky to fill the position fairly quickly but we needed to give Steve Halle, the new Account Clerk II, some time to learn his daily duties before we asked him to work on reports. The reports were processed on November 1, 2001.

I thought that you might be interested in seeing some of the figures. In fiscal year 2001, the municipalities of Maine spent \$6,778,990 on direct costs. In 2000, they spent \$6,245,784. There was an increase of \$533,206. A large part of that money was used to help our clients with shelter costs. In 2000 the amount of money spent on shelter was \$4,366,457 and in 2001 the amount was \$4,729,197. This was an increase of \$362,740. The other big increase in spending was on burials. In 2000 the amount spent on burials was \$155,141 and in 2001 the amount was \$234,141. This was an increase of \$79,000.

The amount of money that the state reimbursed the municipalities also changed. The amount reimbursed went down. The reason for that was that the municipality's obligation went up in most cases. This meant that fewer municipalities met their obligation and received the 90% reimbursement. Those municipalities that did reach their obligation reached it later in the year. In 2000 the State reimbursed the municipalities \$4,158,237, which was 67% of what the municipalities spent. In 2001 the State reimbursed the municipalities \$3,872,067, which was 57%.

In 2000 the average number of households assisted each month were 2943 and the average number of people was 4582 each month. In 2001 the number of households was 2825 and the number of people was 4502. In 2001 only 67 municipalities had clients performing workfare. That means that 10 less municipalities had workfare programs in 2001 than in 2000. The number of people doing workfare was 1177 in 2001 compared to 1,706 in 2000.

In 2001 the average number of GA cases that were also receiving TANF each month was 289. These TANF families received an average of \$176 in assistance each month. In 2000 the average number of TANF households each month was 245 and the amount of assistance was \$196.

The last piece of information that I'd like to share concerns the SSI Interim Assistance Reimbursement Program. This program helps both the municipality and the state to recoup some of the money that is given out. In 2001 the State received \$1,802,738.24 from the Social Security Administration. From that figure \$219,523.94 was reimbursed to the municipalities and the State kept \$280,448.89. In 2000 the State received \$2,211,799.95. From that the municipalities received \$237,883.01 and the State kept \$363,056.57.



Cindy Boyd cont.

Basic Necessities

22MRSA§4301(1) is the definition of basic necessities. It states: "Basic necessities" means food, clothing, shelter, fuel, electricity, and nonelective medical services as recommended by a physician, nonprescription drugs, telephone where it is necessary for medical reasons and any other commodity or service determined essential by the overseer in accordance with the municipality's ordinance and this chapter. "Basic necessities" do not include security deposits for rental property, except for emergency purposes. For the purpose of this subsection, "emergency purposes" means any situation in which no other permanent lodging is available unless a security deposit is paid.

Over the last month there have been a few questions over what is a basic necessity arise from Hotline calls. **Fuel** is a basic necessity. Page 11 of the DHS policy states that municipalities can do a survey of fuel oil companies in the local area to check on yearly consumption figures. The figures will vary due to levels of insulation, construction, the age of the building, etc. Most municipalities forgo any survey and use the maximums developed by MMA. The numbers of gallons allowed vary by month during the heating season of September through May with the lowest usage being in September and May and the highest in January and February. There is no amount of fuel allowed as a necessity during June, July, or August unless the administrator determines that the request is reasonable and appropriate. (Example: The only way to heat the hot water is through the heating unit.)

Applicants are responsible for monitoring their fuel supply and requesting assistance before their supply is depleted. If the application for assistance with fuel is an emergency application, please remember that the administrator needs only assist with enough fuel to cure the emergency. (Example: Applicant receives a monthly Social Security check of \$652 and is the only person in the household. The applicant is over income for General Assistance. On January 21st, the applicant runs out of fuel and has used all of her Social Security money on basic necessities and will not receive her next check until February 2nd. The GA administrator should contract the fuel supplier to see what amount of fuel would be needed to assist the applicant until the next Social Security check is received and only grant assistance for that amount). If there is no fuel supplier in the area that will deliver less than 100 gallons and the amount the applicant would need is closer to 30 gallons, the administrator will have to assist with the 100 gallons.

Please remember that for those applicants that heat with electricity, the maximum amount allowed for heating purposes will be calculated by multiplying the number of gallons of fuel allowed for that month by the current price per gallon. (Example: Mary heats with electricity and she also has a hot water heater run by electricity. Mary is the only one in her household. She has zero income and she asks for help with her light bill in January. The cost of fuel is \$1.29 a gallon and the maximum amount allowed in January is 225 gallons. This means that \$280.25 could be granted for fuel plus \$70 for electricity. Mary could be helped with \$350.25 toward her electric bill).

Clothing is a request that has to be looked at on a case-by-case basis. The applicant has to utilize all available resources before the GA administrator should assist with clothing. This means that if a local church has a clothing closet that has the necessary clothing that the applicant is requesting, the applicant can be required to go to the church's clothing closet. There are times that the clothing can be postponable. There are times when clothing is an immediate necessity, such as when there has been a fire or a flood or unusually cold weather. Another time that the administrator may decide that clothing is an immediate

Cindy Boyd Cont.

necessity is for employment. (Example: Applicant can start a job the next day if he has work boots). afford to buy it or find a resource to obtain it. The issue of clothing surfaces just before school starts each year. Every parent wants their child to have new clothes to start the school year with. The GA administrator has to determine if there is a real need or if the need is to have new school clothes because the perception is that everyone else will have new clothes.

Furniture is requested every now and then, most often when an applicant moves to Maine from out of state. In the ordinance developed by MMA that most municipalities are using there is a paragraph that deals with other basic necessities. In the 1996 ordinance it is on p. 33 and in the 1998 ordinance it is on p.39. This section states that expenses for other basic necessities will be granted when they are deemed essential to an applicant's health and safety and in some cases upon verification by a physician. Assistance will be granted only when these necessities cannot be obtained through the utilization of available resources. The Department believes that in most cases furniture can be postponed until the applicant can afford to buy it or find a resource to obtain it. There is no health or safety issue around a couch or living room chair. There could be a health issue around an elderly person or a pregnant woman sleeping on the floor. If the municipality assisted the pregnant woman to purchase a mattress, that would follow the ordinance. If the municipality assisted by purchasing a bureau and dresser, that would not be following the ordinance. Each of these requests will have to be looked at on a case-to-case basis. The applicant should be required to try to obtain the item from another resource. There are items that that would require a physician's note. A person who has no medical insurance and no income may need to have a vaporizer due to a breathing problem. This is an item that the town could assist with once the administrator verified that the physician was recommending the vaporizer because of the applicant's health problem.

If you have questions about basic necessities please call the Hotline at 1-800-442-6003 or MMA at 1-800-452-8786. There are times that it helps to talk things through. General Assistance may not be able to help the applicant but there might be another resource available.

State of Maine Holidays

The following is the list of dates that the State of Maine offices will be closed in 2002.

Holiday	Day/Date Observed
New Year's Day	Tuesday, January 1, 2002
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Monday, January 21, 2002
Washington's Birthday (President's Day)	Monday, February 18, 2002
Patriot's Day	Monday, April 15, 2002
Memorial Day	Monday, May 27, 2002
Independence Day	Thursday, July 4, 2002
Labor Day	Monday, September 2, 2002
Columbus Day	Monday, October 14, 2002
Veteran's Day	Monday, November 11, 2002
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 28, 2002
Thanksgiving Friday	Friday, November 29, 2002
Christmas	Wednesday, December 25, 2002

Please note that there will not be anyone available to answer Hotline calls on those days. There is no voice

Cindy Boyd Cont.

mail for the 1-800-442-6003 line. There are four people who take turns working the Hotline. We are all in different offices. We all have voice mail on our phones but you do not call us directly. Two of us have office space in Augusta, one is in Houlton, and one is in Portland. When you call 1-800-442-6003, you reach a receptionist who relays the phone call through to whomever is on Hotline that day. If you are lucky you reach one of us. If we are on the line with another call or away from our desk, you get our voice mail. The receptionist not only gets calls for General Assistance, she has to transfer calls for Quality Assurance, Medical Review, Support Enforcement, the other Program Managers, Management Information Systems, and the Bureau Director and her Deputies. Every call that you put through to us is important and we try to get back to you as fast as we can so please bear with us.

If you have a call that is for me, such as a question about a plan of correction or a problem with a prescription printout, please let the receptionist know that you want to speak to me not the person on Hotline. If I am out of the office and you get my voice mail, please leave a message. If it is something that you feel needs an answer immediately, press zero and you will be connected with my clerk. She will be able to page me.

Maine Service Corps

The Maine Service Corps mission is to address issues of low-income housing and youth at risk in Bangor, Lewiston and the mid-coast area.

PROJECTS:

- **Bangor:** A ten-member crew upgrades and constructs housing units to be used as affordable, accessible housing for persons with limited incomes and people with disabilities. Examples of service include installing sheetrock, new exterior siding, flooring and painting.
- **Lewiston:** A nine-member crew serves with non-violent, first-time offenders while they fulfill their community service obligations. Crew members provide guidance, conflict resolution skills, and a variety of other services and information to foster better living skills in the youth.
- **Mid-coast:** A six-member team serves on housing improvement projects.

For more information, please contact:

Jonathan Underwood, ju@jceimaine.org
P.O. Box 268, 41 Water Street
Wiscasset, ME 04578
207/882-7552; FAX 207/882-4457



Colorectal Cancer Facts



What is Colorectal Cancer?

- Almost all cases of colorectal cancer, also referred to as colon cancer, begin with the development of benign colonic polyps.
- Polyps form when cells lining the colon grow, divide and reproduce in an unhealthy, disorderly way, producing a growth.
- These polyps can be cancerous, invading the colon wall and surrounding blood vessels, and spreading to other parts of the body.
- Colorectal cancer frequently begins without symptoms.

What Causes Colorectal Cancer?

- The exact causes of colorectal cancer are unknown, but the disease appears to be caused by both inherited and lifestyle factors.
- Diets high in fat and low in fruits and vegetables – such as those that include red meat, fried foods and high-fat dairy products – may increase the risk of colorectal cancer.
- Lifestyle factors –such as cigarette smoking, a sedentary lifestyle, and obesity – also may increase the risk of developing the disease.
- Genetic factors may determine a person's susceptibility to the disease, whereas dietary and other lifestyle factors may determine which at-risk individuals actually go on to develop the disease.

How Common is Colorectal Cancer?

- Colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the United States, and the third most common cancer overall.
- This year, more than 50,000 Americans will die from colorectal cancer and approximately 131,600 new cases will be diagnosed.
- Eighty to 90 million Americans (approximately 25 percent of the US population) are considered at risk because of age or other factors.
- More women over the age of 75 die from colorectal cancer than from breast cancer.

Who Is At Risk?

- Men and women aged 50 and older are at almost equal risk of developing colorectal cancer.
- Those who have a personal or family history of colorectal neoplasia (cancer or polyps) are at high risk of developing the disease.
- Anyone who has a personal history of inflammatory bowel disease, such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease, is also at high risk.
- Although the incidence of colorectal cancer appears to be the same among all racial groups, survival rates seem to be lower for African-Americans.

How Can You Prevent Colorectal Cancer?

- Know your family history.
- See your doctor for yearly screenings if you are aged 50 or older.
- Maintain a diet low in animal fat and high in fruits, vegetables and fiber.
- Exercise regularly.
- Prevent obesity.
- Avoid cigarette smoking.

What You Need To Know ...

- Early detection saves lives – colorectal cancer is preventable, even curable when detected early.
- If colorectal cancer is found early enough, the patient has more than a 90 percent chance of survival.
- Colorectal cancer screenings are safe and effective and are now covered by Medicare and an increasing number of other health providers.
- Several screening methods can be used to detect polyps before they become cancerous, such as fecal occult blood test, colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy and barium x-ray. These tests also can detect cancer in its early stages.



Baldacci Opposes Fuel Assistance Cut

BALDACCIO PPOSES CUT IN PRESIDENT'S BUDGET FOR LOW INCOME HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE

U.S. Representative John Baldacci wrote to President Bush on Friday to express his concern about funding cuts in the Administration's Fiscal Year 2003 Budget for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Maine's Second District Representative also outlined his objections to the Administration's proposal to change the funding formula for LIHEAP grants to the states.

"In this period of economic uncertainty, the proposed 15 percent cut in funding for LIHEAP will hurt many Maine families. For low-income and elderly Mainers, the heating assistance provided through the LIHEAP program is absolutely critical. By helping to assure properly heated homes, LIHEAP assistance allows families to use their limited resources for food and medical expenses," Baldacci commented in his letter to President Bush.

The Administration's budget calls for a reduction of \$300 million for LIHEAP. It proposes a total allocation of \$1.7 billion -- down from \$2 billion. This nationwide cut would mean a 15 percent decline in federal resources for Maine.

Baldacci explained that the Administration's proposal to alter the funding-distribution formula by removing consideration of a state's weather patterns, and placing greater emphasis on its income levels and energy expenditures, could also adversely impact Maine. He noted that the state routinely experiences bitter cold winter weather, and that the current funding formula takes winter heating cost data into account. This, Baldacci stressed in his letter, is an important consideration -- one that has proven effective and beneficial to Maine and other states. He encouraged the President to maintain the current formula. "LIHEAP is too important for the health and security of Maine families to be cut. Indeed, I would argue that funding should be increased. I urge you to reconsider your proposals to reduce LIHEAP funding and change the allocation formula," Baldacci concluded.

Baldacci has been a strong advocate for the federally-funded LIHEAP program since taking office in 1995. He received the National Energy Assistance Directors Association's annual award in 1997 for his work to preserve fuel assistance for seniors and low income families. LIHEAP helps seniors, people with disabilities and low-income families with children to maintain a properly heated home during the winter.

*"If you want to feel rich, just count all of the things you have that
money can't buy."*

-unknown

2002 Poverty Level Guidelines

2002 POVERTY LEVEL GUIDELINES
All State (except Alaska, Hawaii & D.C.)
Income Guidelines as Published in the Federal Register on 2/14/02

FAMILY SIZE	ANNUAL GUIDELINES							
	PERCENT OF POVERTY		133%	135%	150%	175%	185%	200%
	100%	120%						
1	8,860.00	10,632.00	11,783.80	11,961.00	13,290.00	15,505.00	16,391.00	17,720.00
2	11,940.00	14,328.00	15,880.20	16,119.00	17,910.00	20,895.00	22,089.00	23,880.00
3	15,020.00	18,024.00	19,976.60	20,277.00	22,530.00	26,285.00	27,787.00	30,040.00
4	18,100.00	21,720.00	24,073.00	24,435.00	27,150.00	31,675.00	33,485.00	36,200.00
5	21,180.00	25,416.00	28,169.40	28,593.00	31,770.00	37,065.00	39,183.00	42,360.00
6	24,260.00	29,112.00	32,265.80	32,751.00	36,390.00	42,455.00	44,881.00	48,520.00
7	27,340.00	32,808.00	36,362.20	36,909.00	41,010.00	47,845.00	50,579.00	54,680.00
8	30,420.00	36,504.00	40,458.60	41,067.00	45,630.00	53,235.00	56,277.00	60,840.00

For family units of more than 8 members, add \$3,080 for each additional member.

FAMILY SIZE	MONTHLY GUIDELINES							
	PERCENT OF POVERTY		133%	135%	150%	175%	185%	200%
	100%	120%						
1	738.33	886.00	981.98	996.75	1,107.50	1,292.08	1,365.92	1,476.67
2	995.00	1,194.00	1,323.35	1,343.25	1,492.50	1,741.25	1,840.75	1,990.00
3	1,251.67	1,502.00	1,664.72	1,689.75	1,877.50	2,190.42	2,315.58	2,503.33
4	1,508.33	1,810.00	2,006.08	2,036.25	2,262.50	2,639.58	2,790.42	3,016.67
5	1,765.00	2,118.00	2,347.45	2,382.75	2,647.50	3,088.75	3,265.25	3,530.00
6	2,021.67	2,426.00	2,688.82	2,729.25	3,032.50	3,537.92	3,740.08	4,043.33
7	2,278.33	2,734.00	3,030.18	3,075.75	3,417.50	3,987.08	4,214.92	4,556.67
8	2,535.00	3,042.00	3,371.55	3,422.25	3,802.50	4,436.25	4,689.75	5,070.00

Habitat for Humanity

On February 27, 2002 Habitat for Humanity Bath-Brunswick dedicated its 15th house. The home was located on Old Stage Road in Woolwich and was the first rural build. On January 24, 2002 HFH Greater Portland also dedicated a new home on Roberts Mill Rd. in South Portland and soon will be dedicating a new home on Plymouth St. in Portland.



The next Women Build for HFH Bath-Brunswick is slated to kick off on August 1, 2002. The project has received a home site donation from United Voice Community Land Trust and a heating system from Dead River Company.

To get involved call Habitat for Humanity Bath-Brunswick at 207-729-0311.

General Assistance Compromise Struck

Geoff Herman, MMA

LD 1963, An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Eligibility for General Assistance was submitted to the Legislature by Rep. Richard Duncan (Presque Isle) for the purpose of resolving a fundamental contradiction in General Assistance (GA) law. At issue is the treatment of “lump sum” income, especially with respect to an initial applicant. An initial applicant is a person that has not applied for GA for at least a year. In 1993, GA law was comprehensively reformed with a common theme of increasing expectations of personal responsibility among GA recipients. Along with many reforms enacted that year, one change would prevent recipients of large lump sum payments (workers compensation settlements, inheritance, lottery winnings, etc.) from receiving local welfare benefits for a period of time proportionate to the size of the lump sum payment. The system of implementing that policy is called the “proration” of lump sum income. Although this new policy in 1993 was expressly enacted to apply to initial as well as repeat GA applicants, a parallel change to the definition of “lump sum payment” was not made because of an oversight in drafting the new law. Because that parallel change was not enacted, a conflict about whether lump sum proration should be applied to initial applicants exists in current GA law. LD 1963 was submitted to correct that oversight by conforming the definition of lump sum payment to the policy of prorating those payments as usable household income over time. At the public hearing on LD 1963 on January 31st, advocates for people of low income tried to convince the Human Services Committee to reconcile the contradictory statutes in the other direction, by abandoning the policy of holding initial GA applicants accountable for how they spend a large lump sum windfall. The Human Services Committee asked the Department of Human Services, the municipal welfare directors and the advocates for the poor to attempt to work out a compromise, and they did. On February 7th, the Human Services Committee accepted the result of the negotiations, which achieve the following results: 1) The intention of LD 1963 will be retained. The contradiction in General Assistance law will be reconciled so that the lump sum payments received by an initial GA applicant can be reasonably prorated in the process of determining that applicant’s eligibility for assistance. 2) An initial applicant who is not eligible to receive assistance solely on the basis of a proration of lump sum income will be eligible to receive emergency assistance to address an immediate need. Upon subsequent applications for GA, that applicant’s eligibility will be subject to all the qualifying standards of GA law. 3) The lump sum income proration rules will be clarified to ensure that they are reasonably applied. Specifically, if an applicant has spent lump sum income repaying a loan and it can be verified that the loan was provided to the applicant to pay for basic necessities, the value of the loan repayment will be subtracted or “disregarded” from the value of the lump sum payment before proration. In addition, the lump sum value will be divided by the household’s actual monthly costs for basic needs to determine the duration of the lump sum proration, or 150% of the federal poverty level for that household, which ever yields a shorter period of proration. Finally, the amended version of LD 1963 directs the Department of Human Services to convene a stakeholder’s group of municipal welfare directors and low income advocates to review the adequacy of the existing overall maximum levels of basic needs established in GA laws –another element of the 1993 General Assistance reforms. (GH)

Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together.

~ Vincent Van Gogh ~

Upcoming Events

MWDA Membership Meeting will be held on March 14th at MMA in Augusta. The meeting begins at 12:30PM and the scheduled guest speakers Penny French, HEAP coordinator for KVCAP agency and Betty Bero, Senior Consumer Assistant Specialist from the PUC. Ms. French will explain the available programs through the CAP agency, which will include TEFAP, The Emergency Food Assistance Program. Ms. Bero will address the payment plan "process", how it gets arranged, what happens when it is broken, shut offs, etc.

MWDA Certification Training The Maine Welfare Director's will be sponsoring a CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP. The training will be held on March 21, 2002, from 1P.M. - 4 P.M. at the Southern Maine Medical Center at 72 Main Street in Kennebunk. The cost is \$15.00 per person to cover refreshments and materials. A flyer with registration information is being mailed to all members.

This training will cover the Maine State Statutes 22 MRSA 4301-4302 and the MMA General Assistance Ordinance. The training covers 1 and 2 of the Mandatory courses required to be certified in General Assistance Regulation and to be certified as a Maine Welfare Director. There will be another training in Bangor in the Fall.

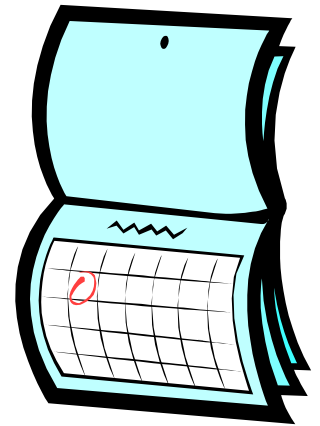
DHS Policy (compliance with DHS audit) DHS Policy which is the third mandatory course, sponsored by Cindy Boyd and staff, will be held in Rockland on March 19, 2002; Lyman March 20, 2002; and Presque Isle on March 26 and 27, 2002. Flyers will be going out to all municipalities. More training will be offered in the Fall.

These workshops will benefit everyone who determines General Assistance eligibility. For more information contact Mary Reindl, Brunswick Human Services, (207) 725-6661.

MWDA Spring Seminar will be held at the Black Bear Inn in Orono on April 29 and 30.

Welcome Back Nancy

Maine Welfare Director's Association would like to welcome Nancy Sargent back to Maine Municipal Association as administrative assistant to training and affiliate groups. Nancy has always been an asset to our organization and we are delighted that she has returned.



Work banishes those
three great evils:
boredom, vice, and
poverty.
- anonymous -

Section 8 Housing Limits

Effective 1/31/02)

FY2002

Median

County	Family Income	Program	1 person	2 person	3 person	4 person	5 person	6 person
BANGOR	43,600	30% of median	9,150	10,450	11,750	13,100	14,150	15,150
		VLI	15,250	17,450	19,600	21,800	23,550	25,300
		LI	24,400	27,900	31,400	34,900	37,650	40,450
LEWISTON-AUBURN MSA	43,300	30% of median	9,100	10,400	11,700	13,000	14,050	15,050
		VLI	15,150	17,300	19,500	21,650	23,400	25,100
		LI	24,250	27,700	31,200	34,650	37,400	40,200
PORTLAND MSA	53,900	30% of median	11,300	12,950	14,550	16,150	17,450	18,750
		VLI	18,850	21,550	24,250	26,950	29,100	31,250
		LI	30,200	34,500	38,800	43,100	46,550	50,000
PORTSMOUTH-ROCHESTER MSA	57,300	30% of median	12,050	13,750	15,450	17,200	18,550	19,950
		VLI	20,050	22,900	25,800	28,650	30,950	33,250
		LI	32,100	36,650	41,250	45,850	49,500	53,150
ANDROSCOGGIN	42,900	30% of median	9,000	10,300	11,600	12,850	13,900	14,950
		VLI	15,000	17,150	19,300	21,450	23,150	24,900
		LI	24,000	27,450	30,900	34,300	37,050	39,800
AROOSTOOK	33,300	30% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600
CUMBERLAND	48,800	30% of median	10,250	11,700	13,200	14,650	15,800	17,000
		VLI	17,100	19,500	21,950	24,400	26,350	28,300
		LI	27,350	31,250	35,150	39,050	42,150	45,300
FRANKLIN	36,000	30% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600
HANCOCK	39,400	30% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600
KENNEBEC	43,100	30% of median	9,050	10,350	11,650	12,950	13,950	15,000
		VLI	15,100	17,250	19,400	21,550	23,250	25,000
		LI	24,150	27,600	31,050	34,500	37,250	40,000
KNOX	41,500	30% of median	8,700	9,950	11,200	12,450	13,450	14,450
		VLI	14,550	16,600	18,700	20,750	22,400	24,050
		LI	23,250	26,550	29,900	33,200	35,850	38,500
LINCOLN	39,500	30% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600
OXFORD	35,300	30% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600
PENOBSCOT	37,600	30% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600
PISCATAQUIS	34,400	30% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600

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Section 8 Income Limits (cont.)

Effective 1/31/02)	FY2002							
	Median							
County	Family Income	Program	1 person	2 person	3 person	4 person	5 person	6 person
SAGadahoc	44,800	30% of median	9,400	10,750	12,100	13,450	14,500	15,600
		VLI	15,700	17,900	20,150	22,400	24,200	26,000
		LI	25,100	28,650	32,250	35,850	38,700	41,550
SOMERSET	34,400	30% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600
WALDO	37,500	30% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600
WASHINGTON	29,200 3	0% of median	8,500	9,700	10,950	12,150	13,100	14,100
		VLI	14,200	16,200	18,250	20,250	21,850	23,500
		LI	22,700	25,900	29,150	32,400	35,000	37,600
YORK	47,100	30% of median	9,900	11,300	12,700	14,150	15,250	16,400
		VLI	16,500	18,850	21,200	23,550	25,450	27,300
		LI	26,400	30,150	33,900	37,700	40,700	43,700

*Add 8% of the 4-person limit for each person over 6 persons to determine the family income limit.

Affordable Housing Bond

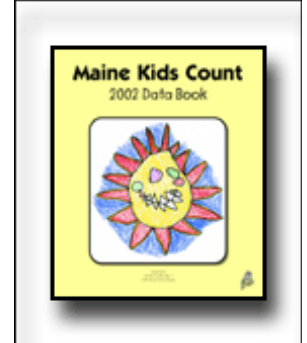
Now that the legislature and the voters have approved a \$12 million bond for creation of affordable housing, the next task is to figure out how the money should be spent. The bond requires that \$2 million of the \$12 million voters approved be used to create permanent housing for victims of domestic violence. The remaining \$10 million will be divided among five uses. The breakdown of the \$12 million is as follows:

Rehabilitation \$2 mil - 16.6%
 Non-profit Capacity \$1.2 mil - 10%
 Supportive Housing—Homeless \$2.75 mil - 23%
 Supportive Housing—Domestic Violence \$2 mil - 16.6%
 Supportive Housing—Mental Health \$2.75 mil - 23%
 Land Acquisition \$1.3 mil - 10.8%

MSHA Director Michael Finnegan said the housing agency would start immediately to effectively allocate the funds. "When we combine the \$12 million in bond funds with other state, federal and private housing funds we can raise, we could be providing up to \$30 million in affordable housing funds," Finnegan said. "This will make an appreciable improvement to the housing available to low income Maine people." Finnegan also noted that in some cases the housing programs are already established, while others MSHA may have to develop in order to distribute funds.

Maine Kids Count

According to the 2002 Maine Kid Count data book a remarkable amount of children have health care. Approximately 9% of Maine children are without health care benefits. This is largely due to public policy and state spending. Nationally that number is 14 percent. Teen pregnancies have decreased from 14.6 percent on 1990 to 8.7 percent in 1999. Also the infant mortality rate has been reduced from 6.3 to 5.3 percent since 1999. Maine families still are battling poverty. One third of Maine's children lived with parents who had jobs but did not earn a livable income and are unable to meet basic needs. 18 percent of children under the age of 5 are living in poverty. Children living in homeless shelters have doubled in the past five years.

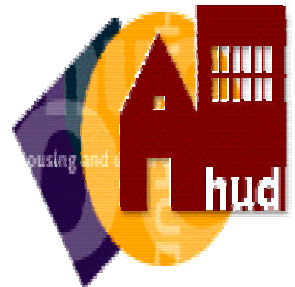


In Androscoggin County, the percentage of children living in poverty in 1998 was 14.6 percent; Franklin County was 15.7 percent and Oxford County was 16.4 percent, compared to 14.2 percent statewide. The county with the smallest percentage of poor children was Cumberland, at 11.7 percent; the highest was Washington County, at 21.5 percent.

HUD News

Homeless Assistance Maine will receive \$6.2 million in homeless assistance. As part of a national \$1 billion homeless assistance package, HUD awarded Maine housing programs including Bangor, Portland and balance of state continuums of care, a total of \$6,207,279 in grants to provide housing and supportive services to homeless families and individuals.

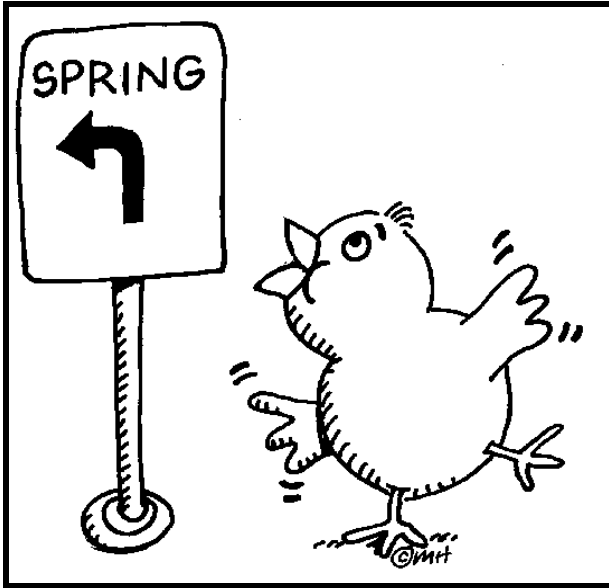
Section 8 Incremental Vouchers. The FY 2003 budget includes funding for approximately 34,000 additional incremental housing choice vouchers. This increase is nearly double the 18,000 incremental vouchers provided in FY 2002 and will help more Maine families find affordable rental housing



Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME). HOME grants to States and localities fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership or provide direct rental assistance to low-income people. Maine will receive an estimated \$8.5 million in HOME funding under the President's proposed budget, an increase of approximately \$1 million over current funding. (FY 2003)

Column Creation

Do you have a General Assistance case or experience you would like to have answered or shared with other GA Administrators? Each issue we would like to have a variety of contributions from MWDA members from across the State. Send them to me and Antoinette Mancusi from MMA has agreed to answer questions or to comment on each article. Items can be sent to Judy Hardy-Goddard, Town of Lisbon, 300 Lisbon Street, Lisbon, ME 04250 or e-mailed to jhardygoddard@lisbonme.org.



March is Daffodil Days for American Cancer Society.

Cryptogram answer:

To establish and promote equitable, efficient and standardized administration of General Assistance.

Ability is what you're capable of doing....
 Motivation determines what you do....
 Attitude determines how well you do it

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