

Maine Welfare Director's Association Newsletter



February 2003

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MAINE RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD FOR FOOD STAMP PARTICIPATION

Maine was recently awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the United States Department of Agriculture for excellence in customer service. Maine received the award because it attained a food stamp participation rate of 80%, the 4th best rate in the nation.

The participation rate means that of all potentially eligible food stamp recipients in Maine, 80% are in the program. Maine's participation rate was 80% for the prior year as well, which was also 4th best in the nation.

"This award says a great deal about the responsible and compassionate welfare reform that we as a state have been able to implement over the past five years," said Commissioner Concannon. "The Food Stamps Program is funded almost entirely by the federal government and this is important given the state's current budget short-fall. To the extent that we can get the maximum number of people on food stamps who are eligible, we provide a valuable resource to our most vulnerable citizens without any additional burden on state taxpayers."

Maine's 80% participation rate is tops in New England. Vermont has a participation rate of 76%, 5th best in the nation, and Rhode Island is at 70%, 10th best. By contrast, New Hampshire is 5th worst in the nation with a participation rate of only 46%, and Massachusetts is the 3rd worst at 43%. The national average is 57%.

State officials point out that one of the reasons other states do poorly is because the administration of different assistance programs is split up among different entities. "As a result," Judy Williams, Director of the Bureau of Family Independence, noted, "recipients of one program may not be aware that they are eligible for others." This problem is complicated by the fact that when people leave one assistance program, they are often forced to reapply to other programs for which they still would be eligible.

Williams also cited DHS's emphasis on outreach and a simplified application process as additional reasons for Maine's success. "We have distributed Food Stamp applications everywhere - from hospitals to town offices and nursing homes - and we have changed procedures whenever we can to make the application process as friendly as possible."

The Food Stamps Program, which is 100% federally funded, provides approximately \$100,000,000 per year to low-income people in Maine for purchase of necessary food items. There are currently 56,010 households in Maine receiving food stamps, consisting of 109,135 people nearly half of whom are children. 30% of all families in Maine receiving food stamps have earned income, which means that at least one member of the household is working.

Healthy Maine Prescription Program

You heard it on the news. The Court of Appeals in Washington D.C. struck down Maine's Healthy Maine Prescription program. Many Maine people with Healthy Maine Prescription Cards will lose their discounts. HMP is being – at least temporarily – suspended while Maine works with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to meet the requirements of the Court's decision. But that is not the whole story – **over 36,000 people currently in the HMP program can still use their card.**

What is Health Maine Prescriptions (HMP)? Actually, HMP has two parts. The first part (formerly called the Drugs for the Elderly and Disabled Program) is for over 36,000 elderly and disabled Maine people who are low income (below \$16,391 per year for an individual or \$22,089 for a couple). This program covers 80% of the cost of all generic drugs, and drugs for 13 specified illnesses (diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure, arthritis, chronic lung disease (including emphysema and asthma), anticoagulation, glaucoma, high cholesterol, osteoporosis, thyroid diseases, incontinence, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, and Lou Gehrig's disease.) A much smaller discount is available for most other drugs. People can still get help through this part of the HMP program – these HMP cards are still good!

The **second part** of HMP is for Maine residents with income below \$26,580 per year for an individual and \$35,820 for a couple, people who still have trouble affording their drugs. They do not need to be elderly or disabled. This is the part of HMP that has been suspended because of the court decision. About 74,000 people have HMP cards that have been suspended because of the court decision. **Hold on to your cards! If DHS's changes to the program are accepted by the court, they may become good for a discount again!**

What if you want to apply for HMP? If you think you might be eligible for the first part of HMP – the Drugs for the Elderly and Disabled part – then effective January 1st, applications for this program will be handled by the Department of Human Services, rather than the Bureau of Revenue Services. For an application, contact your local Maine Department of Human Services office or call: 1-866-796-2463.

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We make a living by what we get,
But we make a life by what we give.

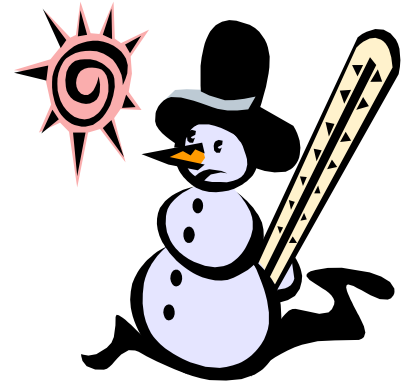
Winston Churchill

Saving Energy in your Apartment

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

In the winter:

- Remember that the temperature at which you set the thermostat will affect your energy savings.
- Thermostats should be set no higher than 72°F during the day and evening when people are home.
- During each 24-hour period, you will save about 3% on your heating bill for every 1° that you lower the thermostat setting. For example, if you normally keep your thermostat set at 75° all the time, and you lower it by 3° to 72°, you will save about 9% (3x3%) on your heating bill. In other words, you will save about 9 cents for every dollar you spend on heating costs.
- For the 8-hour period at night when you're sleeping, you will save an extra 1% on your heating bill for every 1° that you set back the thermostat. For example, if you lower your thermostat from 72° to 65° at night, you will save another 7 cents for every heating dollar you spend.
- You may want to lower the thermostat setting below 72° at night or during the day when people are not home. Some people turn their thermostats down to 60° or 55° at night.
- If you feel there is a problem with the furnace and you can't stay warm, **do not use the stove for additional heat— it is dangerous.** Contact the building manager; there may be a problem with the furnace or boiler.
- Do not open your windows if it gets too hot in your apartment. This wastes energy and money. When you open a window, you lose heat you already paid for. Plus, the furnace will pump out even more heat until the window is closed or the thermostat is turned down.
- If you have a furnace in your apartment, turn down the thermostat when it gets too warm.
- If your building is heated with a central boiler, you could close the radiator valves in the rooms that are too warm. You could also notify the building manager that your apartment is too warm. The manager may be able to adjust the boiler controls to lower your apartment temperature.
- People generate heat. If you have a group of people in your apartment, let the heat they give off help keep your apartment warm. Turn down your thermostat and save some money. Turn the thermostat back up when they leave.
- On sunny days, take advantage of the free heat. Open blinds, shades, and curtains, especially if your windows face south, to help keep your apartment warm. Then simply turn down the thermostat or close the radiator valves to keep from getting too hot. At night, close the blinds, shades, and curtains to help keep heat in your apartment rather than allowing it to escape through the window.



American Heart Month



Fact: Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer of American men and women

Act in Time

The American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute have launched a new "Act in Time" campaign to increase people's awareness of heart attack and the importance of calling 9-1-1 immediately at the onset of heart attack symptoms.

Statistics

Coronary heart disease is America's No. 1 killer. Stroke is No. 3 and a leading cause of serious disability. That's why it's so important to reduce your risk factors, know the warning signs, and know how to respond quickly and properly if warning signs occur.

Heart Attack Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense -- the "movie heart attack," where no one doubts what's happening. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.** This feeling often comes along with chest discomfort. But it can occur before the chest discomfort.
- **Other signs:** These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

If you or someone you're with has chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the other signs, don't wait longer than a few minutes (no more than 5) before calling for help. Call 9-1-1... Get to a hospital right away. Calling 9-1-1 is almost always the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment. Emergency medical services staff can begin treatment when they arrive -- up to an hour sooner than if someone gets to the hospital by car. The staff are also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped. You'll get treated faster in the hospital if you come by ambulance, too. If you can't access the emergency medical services (EMS), have someone drive you to the hospital right away. If you're the one having symptoms, don't drive yourself, unless you have absolutely no other option.

Stroke Warning Signs

The American Stroke Association says these are the warning signs of stroke:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

If you or someone with you has one or more of these signs, don't delay! Immediately call 9-1-1 or the emergency medical services (EMS) number so an ambulance (ideally with advanced life support) can be sent for you. Also, check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared. It's very important to take immediate action. If given within three hours of the start of symptoms, a clot-busting drug can reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke.

Cardiac arrest strikes immediately and without warning. Here are the signs:

- Sudden loss of responsiveness. No response to gentle shaking.
- No normal breathing. The victim does not take a normal breath when you check for several seconds.
- No signs of circulation. No movement or coughing.

If cardiac arrest occurs, call 9-1-1 and begin CPR immediately. If an automated external defibrillator (AED) is available and someone trained to use it is nearby, involve them.

MSHA Receives Money for the Homeless

MSHA receives over \$4 million in federal housing grants to help homeless people

AUGUSTA – The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has awarded the Maine State Housing Authority more than \$4 million in grants to provide housing for homeless people.

The HUD grant includes over \$3.5 million for MSHA's Continuum of Care effort, and \$702,000 for the Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) award, said MSHA Director Michael Finnegan.

"These grants will provide vital housing to some of our most vulnerable residents," Finnegan said. "We devote a considerable amount of work every year to apply for this federal money, and it is gratifying to see the effort pay off with more than \$4 million in federal funds for Maine, and more than \$7 million total for the state."

MSHA distributes the ESG money to the network of homeless shelters throughout Maine. The money is used to help keep the shelters operating.

The Continuum of Care money continues funding for 158 Shelter Plus Care vouchers, and adds another 37 vouchers. It also funds creation of 19 units of supportive housing, and the start up phase of MSHA's homeless Management Information System.

The vouchers provide a housing subsidy and needed services for homeless people with disabilities and their families. The supportive housing funds will finance development of additional apartments where the tenants will have access to the services they need. The Management Information System is a new computer based system for tracking homeless people.

The total amount coming to Maine includes separate grants for the cities of Portland and Bangor. Portland will receive over \$2 million and Bangor \$653,478.

Upcoming Events

General Assistance Certification	Friday, February 7 in Bangor (General Assistance Office)
General Assistance Basics	Friday, February 14 at MMA, Augusta
Membership Meeting	Thursday, March 13 at CMP, Augusta
Spring Seminar—Point Sebago	Monday and Tuesday, May 19 & 20 Point Sebago, Casco



MSHA New Housing Program



The Maine State Housing Authority announced it is seeking proposals from organizations to operate a new \$600,000 program that will help keep seniors living in their own homes.

"Our Keeping Seniors Home program is designed to finance repairs to homes of low income senior citizens who could not afford the repairs themselves, in order to make the homes safer and more accessible and allow the senior residents to live in them longer," said MSHA Director Michael Finnegan.

"We are requesting proposals from organizations interested in running this program for us. We will select one or more agencies to serve seniors throughout Maine. We expect to start the program in the spring."

The one or more organizations operating the program will be required to verify the qualifications of contractors doing the work and insure the proper permits are obtained before work begins. The operators also will need to complete all the work on the repairs and accessibility improvements within two years.

The program guidelines allow grants of up to \$5,000 per household for repairs and accessibility modifications. To be eligible, the homeowner must be age 62 or older and have an income at or below 170 percent of the federal poverty level. For a household of two people, that is an annual income of \$20,298 or less. For a single person household, it is \$15,062 or less.

The concept behind Keeping Seniors Home is to finance repairs that will prevent seniors from being forced to move out of their homes, and into nursing homes or assisted living facilities, because they cannot afford the repairs or modifications needed to make the home habitable.

"A few years ago we identified creating more housing opportunities for our burgeoning senior population as one of our housing priorities and one of Maine's emerging housing issues," Finnegan noted. "This new effort is one of several steps we have taken, and the first using the new state housing bond resource, to provide seniors with more housing options."

Maine voters approved a \$12 million general obligation bond to fund affordable housing ventures in November 2001. Following the vote MSHA held a series of public forums to gather information and determine how best to address the bond fund targets.

"During the forums we heard from many people about the need for a program to address the housing needs of our low income senior homeowners," said Finnegan. "This is one in a series of programs we are developing using the bond money."

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

Dr. Leo Buscaglia

Hotline Calls

We recently received a call from a municipality concerning Maine's Rent Refund Program. The Welfare Director wanted to know if the money that her client received from the Rent Refund Program was considered as income.



First let me explain that the Maine Revenue Service administers the Rent Refund Program and the Property Tax Refund Program. These programs are available for qualified homeowners or renters who live in Maine. In order to be eligible for either program a person has to:

1. Have been a resident of Maine for all 12 months of the previous year.
2. Have owned or rented a home in Maine for all 12 months of the previous year and occupied that home for at least 6 months of the previous year
3. Have income that is below the allowable amount for that year (the figure changes every year).
4. Have a property tax bill that is more than 4% of the total household income: or, have paid rent that was more than 22% of the total household income. Elderly people with very low income (this figure also changes every year) do not have to meet this requirement.

The most a household can receive, as a refund is \$1,000. This is a once a year program, but you are eligible to apply every year. A person can apply by phone or by submitting an application. To file by phone you first need to complete the application and then call the toll free number (1-800-604-1188). You can obtain an application by calling 624-7894. If you have questions about the program, call 626-8475.

The answer to the question: "Does money from the Rent Refund Program count as income for GA?" is **no**. The same goes for money received from the Tax Refund Program. 36MRSAS6216 states: "Benefits received under this chapter may not be included as income for purposes of any state or municipally administered public benefit program but may be considered for purposes of determining eligibility for abatement under section 841, subsection 2."

TANF Time Limits

Family members may get TANF benefits for more than 60 months if they follow all the TANF Program rules.

What happens in month 61?

- If no family member is sanctioned in month 60 and family members have fewer than 3 sanctions, the whole family can still get TANF.
- If a family member is sanctioned in month 60, he or she does not get TANF until the penalty is served.
- If someone in the family has been sanctioned 3 or more times, that person will be removed from the TANF grant in the 61st month. The penalty period is equal to the time of their last sanction. The rest of the family can still get TANF. Family members must still follow program rules, even during the penalty period.

There is no penalty for families:

- who have experienced domestic violence.
- when a family member has an illness or incapacity.
- when good cause is determined.

From the Desk of Cindy Boyd

Posted General Assistance Notice

22MRSA 4304(1) states that "There must be in each municipality a General Assistance office or designated place where any person may apply for General Assistance at regular, reasonable times designated by the municipal officers. Notice must be posted of these times, the name of the overseer available to take the applications in an emergency at all other times, the fact that the municipality must issue a written decision on all applications within 24 hours and the department's toll-free telephone number for reporting alleged violations in accordance with section 4321."

One of the first things that the Field Examiner does when conducting a review is to view the notice. The notice must be posted in a place where the public can see it 24 hours a day. That means it cannot be posted on a bulletin board inside the office. If the General Assistance office were on the third floor, you would still need to place the notice somewhere that could be seen by the public. It would not be reasonable to expect someone to read a notice posted in a third floor window.

The mail-in reviews ask questions about the notice. One of the things that we are seeing is that some municipalities are entering the DHS 800 as the number to use for emergencies after hours. This is wrong. The Department's number is to be on the notice but not as the number for applicants to call after hours. There is no one here after 5:00 PM and we are not here on the weekend. The number has to be the number of someone authorized by the municipality to determine GA eligibility and grant assistance. There are municipalities that post the number of the Police Department as their emergency number. That is OK provided the Police Department knows whom to contact. I realize that someone may not want to have his or her home number posted.

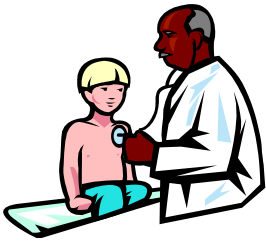
The notice also has to state that written decisions have to be given within 24 hours. The fact that the statutes and the ordinance are available for public viewing also needs to be part of the notice. The Department has a copy of a notice if your municipality needs a new one. You can call us at 1-800-442-6003 and we will mail you one. Maine Municipal Association has also designed a notice that is used by a large number of municipalities and some municipalities have developed their own notice.

We have municipalities that do not have an actual municipal building and the notice is posted in a place that is used by the town to get information out. The Fire Station is a common site used. The main thing is that there is a notice posted that is in plain sight 24 hours a day.

"ACT AS IF WHAT YOU DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE.
IT DOES"

-William James

Cindy Boyd Continued



Limited Benefits

Some people enrolled in MaineCare get Limited Benefits. The MaineCare ID is blue and says "Limited Benefits". The benefits the enrolled person gets are less than the Full Benefits. A person is enrolled in Limited Benefits when they are eligible for some assistance but are not eligible for Full Benefits.

There are different categories of Limited Benefits. To find out if a particular service is covered the provider must call the DHS voice response.

Some people getting Limited Benefits are required to pay a \$10 co-pay. Unlike those enrolled in Full Benefits, the service can be denied if the co-pay is not paid. Hospital visits, physician visits, and drugs have this required \$10 co-pay.



"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us."

Helen Keller

General Assistance can be used to pay this required \$10 co-pay. The state will pay for the medications. A person needs to meet all the other requirements for General Assistance.

Telephone Assistance Program

You may be eligible to receive telephone service at reduced rates.

All 24 Telephone Companies in the State of Maine provide telephone service at reduced rates under the Lifeline Service Program to residential customers when a member of a customer's household is receiving support from any one of the following programs:

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Medicaid
- Food Stamps
- Emergency Assistance Program
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Lifeline Service Program

Allows a customer, or a member of a customer's household, a \$10.50 credit per month to be applied toward the telephone bill.

Installation Subsidy

Under this program, if you do not have a telephone, service can be installed for \$10.00. Customers can install their own inside wire, or the telephone company can do it for a fee. Call your local phone company today to enroll in the Lifeline Service Program.



Maine to Receive \$5.7 million to boost home-heating

The Bush administration decision to release \$200 million in emergency aid for low-income families to buy heating oil will bring an estimated \$5.7 million to Maine.

The extra money, part of the Low-Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program, comes during a season of unusually low temperatures, high heating-oil costs and the threat of even higher prices from a possible war against Iraq.

"For many low-income families, it's not just the cold outside, it's the cold inside," said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine. "These funds will help hundreds of thousands of low-income families stay warm this winter."

Collins sponsored legislation with Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine, to boost Bush's proposal for \$1.4 billion in aid to \$1.7 billion. The full Senate approved the proposal 88 to 4 as an amendment to the massive spending bill now pending in the House.

Three days after the Senate vote Jan. 21, Bush released \$200 million in previously approved emergency funding. Congress could still approve the additional \$300 million in the pending spending measure.

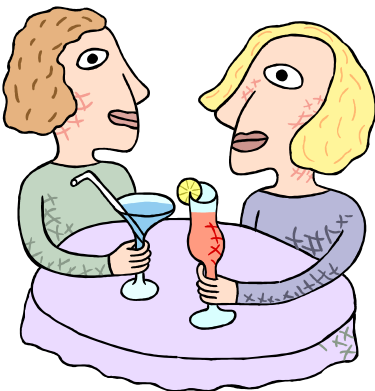
Snowe said the funding "is crucial, particularly because severe winter cold and rising heating prices have taken a real toll on the budgets of low-income families."

Eligible recipients earn less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level, which is \$13,290 for an individual and \$27,150 for a family of four. About 43,000 Maine households applied for the assistance through early December, which was nearly as many as the entire previous season.

The Maine State Housing Authority, which administers the program, had budgeted to provide 48,000 households an average benefit of \$350 for the whole season. The extra money will allow the state to either help up to 53,000 families or provide more money to fewer families.

"The additional funding could not have come at a more critical time, after Maine people have suffered through nearly two weeks of below-zero temperatures," said Michael Finnegan, the housing director.

International Friendship Week Feb. 16-22



Friendship is like the breeze,
 You can't hold it,
 Smell it,
 Taste it,
 Or know when it's coming,
 But you can always feel it,
 And you'll always know it's there,
 It may come and then go,
 But you can know it'll always be back.

Winterize Your Workout

Dressing for cold weather is easier than ever with all the great high tech fabrics currently available. Choose breathable fabrics that wick moisture from the body and dry quickly.

Start with a thin base layer. In temps from 40 to 60 this may be all you need. Remember, the rule of thumb is to dress for temps about 20 degrees higher than they actually are. You may be slightly cool to begin with, but you will be warm as soon as your body gets moving.

When the temperature is below 40 you will probably need a second layer. This should be a thin outer shell to help keep out wind and cold. (If you live in an area with much winter precipitation be sure this layer is wind and water proof.) Add gloves and a headband. These can be removed as you warm up and replaced when you are chilled.

As the temperature drops add an insulating (thermal) layer. This is an inner layer between the base layer and the outer shell that holds in your body heat. Once again, be sure this is a good quality, breathable, wicking fabric. Exchange your headband for a hat and scarf, or a neck gaiter.

Don't forget your feet. Waterproof hiking boots are widely available. They may need to be a size larger than your usual walking shoes in order to accommodate thicker (or extra layers) of socks. For some added fun try a pair of snow shoes.

Some good fabric choices for winter clothing include Thermax, Polar Fleece, Cool Max, Thinsulate, Gortex, wool, etc. Stay away from cotton as it absorbs and retains moisture.

Additional tips -

If you need additional layers add them, but stick with several thin layers rather than one or two bulky layers.

Take wind chill into consideration when dressing.

Winds = temperature drop

10 mph = 15 degrees

15 mph = 20 degrees

20 mph = 25 degrees

30 mph = 35 degrees

Watch your step. You may have to slow down in some weather conditions.

Wear reflective clothing or add reflective tape to your clothing.

Be sure to wear sunblock and sunglasses.

Don't forget your water.

GovBenefits

GovBenefits is a new Federal government website that provides a single destination for citizens to find government benefits for which they are eligible as well as contact information to begin the application process. The website is www.govbenefits.gov.

Senator Susan Collins and Medicaid

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Susan Collins introduced bipartisan legislation that would assist states through a period when many are experiencing a severe fiscal crisis due to the effects of the downturn in the economy, decreasing state revenues, and the residual economic effects of September 11th. The bill would increase the federal government's share of each state's Medicaid costs and provide block grants for social services.

Senator Collins's bill would provide \$10 billion in designated Medicaid relief and \$10 billion in social services block grants over 18 months. The bill would result in \$128 million over 18 months for Maine.

"Medicaid is the fastest growing component of state budgets," said Senator Collins. "While state revenues were stagnant or declined in many states last year, Medicaid costs increased. And the situation with state budgets has deteriorated greatly in the few short months since the Senate passed the legislation we introduced last July. Maine's budget deficit has grown to a projected \$2 billion dollars over the next two years."

Similar legislation was introduced by Senator Collins last year and, in July, and it passed the Senate with 75 votes. "The level of support was high then," said Senator Collins. "With state budget deficits having grown deeper, we anticipate an equal if not greater level of support now."

Maine's Minimum Wage Increases

Maine's minimum wage earners will get a raise on New Year's Day, 2003, when the state's lowest legal hourly wage rises from \$5.75 to \$6.25.

Maine's minimum wage law allows exceptions for tipped employees, such as waiters and waitresses, for whom the minimum wage is \$3.13 an hour.

However, total tips plus the hourly wage must average at least \$6.25 an hour. If the tips plus hourly wage do not average at least \$6.25, the employer must make up the difference, the Labor Department said.

Maine law also exempts employees from minimum wage and overtime coverage if they work in an executive, administrative or professional capacity and the annual salary exceeds 3,000 times the minimum wage. The weekly equivalent for those salaried employees is \$360.58.

Maine's minimum wage exceeds the federal minimum. The last federal minimum wage increase was in 1997, when it jumped 40 cents to \$5.15 an hour from \$4.75.

Congressional Democrats proposed raising the wage to \$5.75 an hour this year, \$6.25 next year and \$6.65 in 2004, but the bill did not pass.

Alternative Aid

Alternative Aid is an important program for low-income working families. This program gives families who are working or looking for work, and who are not on TANF help with short term, work-related services. Instead of applying for TANF benefits, families have the choice of applying for Alternative Aid. This program which provides the equivalent of up to 3 months worth of TANF benefits helps families with things like car repairs, clothing, or other services that they need to get or need to keep a job.

Eligibility

Families are eligible for Alternative Aid if they meet the income, asset and other eligibility requirements for TANF, and the parent or caretaker relative in the family has a job or is looking for one. One important difference is eligibility between the two programs is that a parent's wages that are counted in determining eligibility for TANF are not counted in the Alternative Aid Program. However, the family must meet the program's income eligibility pretest. For example, a family of 3 with income (not counting wages from the parent's job) of less than \$596.00 a month, is likely to be eligible for Alternative Aid; a family of two with income less than \$445.00 a month would likely be eligible.

Vouchers not Cash

Alternative aid doesn't come as a cash benefit. Instead, it takes the form of vouchers for services or items that the family needs. For example, a family of 3 who is eligible for Alternative Aid and having no other income could be eligible for up to \$1455 in vouchers for car repairs, or other items or services that they need to get or keep a job. Families who receive Alternative Aid are not required to sign their child support over to the state or be involved with the ASPIRE program. **A family can get Alternative Aid only once in a lifetime.**

Decide that you need more help?

A family that receives Alternative Aid but decides it really needs longer-term help from the TANF Program can still apply for TANF. If they apply for TANF during the 3 months they are receiving Alternative Aid, the Alternative Aid must be repaid for any time during which the family received both TANF and Alternative Aid. The repayment method is the same as that used for the repayment of unintentional overpayments in TANF (For families receiving full TANF grant, DHS will keep 10% of the family's benefit. For families receiving less than the full TANF amount DHS will keep 30% of the family's TANF benefit)

Clients can apply for Alternative Aid by contacting their local DHS office.



“THE MEASURE OF LIFE IS NOT IT'S
DURATION BUT IT'S DONATION”

-Peter Marshall

MaineCare Frequently Asked Questions

- **Will MaineCare pay for dental care?**

Children under age 21 and consumers residing in ICFs/MR are covered for regular care, treatment, and diagnostic services.

Adults are covered only for emergency treatment to stop pain, infection or tooth loss. If you need teeth extracted so that you can get other medical services, like radiation or heart surgery, MaineCare will pay.

- **Does MaineCare pay for braces?**

Only for children under age 21 who get approval by the Bureau of Medical Services before starting services. Your child's dentist must write to the Bureau of Medical Services.

- **Does MaineCare pay for eyeglasses?**

Children under age 21 can get eyeglasses, but we only pay for certain types of frames. Adults may receive one set of eyeglasses in a life time if the lenses are a power of 10 diopters or more.

- **Does MaineCare pay for emergency medical or dental care out of state?**

If you are visiting out of state and get sick, MaineCare will pay if the health care provider will accept MaineCare payment. If the provider is not willing to accept MaineCare, you will have to pay. For approved out-of-state providers: call Provider Enrollment at 207-287-3757 or 1-800-321-5557 Ext. 73757.

- **Does MaineCare pay for special services out of state?**

MaineCare will only pay if you get approval by the Bureau of Medical Services before you get the service. Your doctor must write to us.

- **Does my estate have to pay back MaineCare when I die?**

If you get MaineCare and are age 55 or older, the State will make a claim on your estate to recover the money that MaineCare has paid for your care. No claim will be made if you are survived by your spouse, or your child who is under age 21 or who is disabled.

Food Stamp Mailing Schedule

Mail Groups	January	February	March	April	May	June
Birthdays ending in 0 & 9	10	11	11	9	9	10
Birthdays ending in 1 & 8	13	12	12	10	12	11
Birthdays ending in 2 & 3	14	13	13	11	13	12
Birthdays ending in 4 & 7	15	14	14	14	14	13
Birthdays ending in 5 & 6	16	18	17	15	15	16

Pending Furlough Days

WE'RE ON THE WEB
WWW.MAINEWELFAREDIRECTORS.ORG

Welfare Director

Dwelling unit
Need
Household
Workfare
Application
Recipient
Deficit
Disables
Interview
Narrative
Income
Emergency
Eligible
Claimant
Budget
Case record
Resident

1. Easy on the Eyes
2. Laughing on the outside, crying on the inside
3. Crash Diet
4. Work behind the scenes



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