

Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services  
Commissioner's Office  
11 State House Station  
221 State Street  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011  
Tel: (207) 287-3707; Fax: (207) 287-3005  
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services  
**FROM:** Department of Health and Human Services  
**DATE:** March 18, 2019  
**RE:** Responding to questions re: Budget Group B

---

### PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

#### **Information on the Fraud Investigation and Recovery Unit:**

State Fiscal Year 2018		State Fiscal Year 2019, to date	
Cases opened	4,967	Cases opened	3,693
Collections	\$2,000,870	Collections	\$3,191,290
Expenditures – Personnel	\$2,374,416	Expenditures – Personnel	\$1,841,698
Expenditures – Admin/Ops	\$433,208	Expenditures – Admin/Ops	\$347,301

For collections, not all are intentional fraud. The FIRU team is made up of investigator and overpayment specialists (eligibility specialists focused on payment errors). Referrals are submitted through various channels (phone, online, OFI staff, public), and tracked by OFI. If there is an overpayment error, the information is gathered to determine if it was an intentional or unintentional error on part of the client, or an agency error where the eligibility specialist made a mistake, missed a timeline, etc. After this has been determined, the recovery process takes over to establish a collection process. If it was intentional, it's take to the next level to see if there is additional action (e.g. prosecution) necessary.

In 2018, the Department imposed individual disqualifications for Intentional Program Violations that will result in an anticipated cost savings of \$694,176. Overpayments established in SFY18 are valued at \$3,946,834.

#### **Additional information about the eligibility simplification project – what will that look like? Also further information about other DHHS IT projects? How much one-time funding is in the budget for IT projects?**

This initiative provides funding for modernization of the public assistance web portal. The funds would pay for the redesign of the eligibility process so that it requires less human intervention/touch, more accurate decisions, enhanced speed to decision and an easier application process for the citizen. The modernization would include the following:

- Enhancements to the existing online portal application process (My Maine Connection);
- Development of a mobile-friendly app;
- Real-time connection of the application process to trusted data verification sources;

- Real-time eligibility determinations for some programs; and
- Call Center changes to decrease wait times.

Short term:

- Improved dynamic functionality that is focused on utilizing available data in ACES to expedite application/recertification processing (i.e. prepopulate fields on the web application with known system data versus having the client always have to enter the information at every app, leaving it so they can just update as necessary. A time saver, so people will want to use it instead of paper app).
- Intuitive application questions (i.e. you answer a certain question and only applicable questions are queued for completion versus having to skip through unnecessary pages/questions).
- New telephony innovations like artificial intelligence to answer questions like how and where to apply, what is needed to apply.

Long term:

- Build out on OFI's recently purchased service oriented architecture to create a highway for improved data sharing capabilities with expanded data resources like other Departments, other offices in DHHS, and the Federal Data Services Hub.
- Real time application determinations and noticing.
- Expand phone services to have AI provide more case specific information (e.g. SNAP issuance amount), telephonic signature.

### **Current Technology/Systems Initiatives in the Office for Family Independence**

<b>Initiative Name</b>	<b>Notes/Details</b>
CMS – Determination State	This relates to moving Maine from an assessment state to a determination state
CR 202	This initiative correct defects within the system
Rules Engine Replacement and updates	This is a system modernization initiative
MEX 2.0	This initiative expands system functionality
6 Month Reporting	This initiative relates to a SNAP policy change from change reporting to six-month reporting
HOPE	This initiative relates to a new program, created by LD 1774 in the 128 <sup>th</sup> (PL Ch. 387)
TANF – 4A/4D	This initiative corrects defects within the system
Utility Items	This initiative relates to system maintenance
Siebel Upgrade	This initiative relates to system maintenance
Letter Conversion/Update	This initiative relates to system maintenance
ASPIRE/Fedcap Webservices	This initiative relates to enhancing system automation

Telephonic Signature	This initiative relates to system adaptation to a new FNS policy
Conduent/EDT Cards	This initiative relates to EBT Card production
Edge Browser Conversion	This initiative relates to system maintenance

Regarding IT projects, a total of \$7,009,322 in one-time funding is included in the budget for IT projects. The breakdown is General Fund of \$2,000,000 and Other Special Revenue of \$5,009,322 (allocated to various grants). Please see the attached list.

**Part CCC: Numbers of those who tested positive for drug tests and sanctions pursuant to Title 22, §3762, sub-§20? How many additional people might qualify for TANF with the repeal of drug testing for drug felonies for TANF applicants or recipients?**

Sanctions can be imposed on applicants for three reasons: 1) failure to complete the screening tool; 2) if the screening tool indicates a likelihood of use of a prohibited substance (marijuana and medically assisted treatment drugs excluded), failure to take a test; and 3) failure to receive treatment after a positive test. In 2018, one individual was sanctioned.

The Department administered approximately 40 tests in 2018. In all cases where tests were given the results were positive for drug use. The drugs used were found to be methadone and/or marijuana, which do not lead to sanctioning.

**Initiative on line 365 (green): TANF block grant line related to AFDC overpayments – verification for the first year of the biennium requiring an allocation of 231,000 in FY20 but only \$4,300 in FY21?**

This is correct. There is a current balance of \$225,553 in the account currently used for the collections that will be transferred to this new account, once established for State Fiscal Year 2020. In State Fiscal Year 2021 and forward, collections are estimated to be \$4,300 per year.

**How much is spent on ASPIRE in the baseline? How much is allocated to FedCap?**

The current annual ASPIRE baselines are General Fund \$7,090,651 and Block Grant \$24,353,863. Of this, the current budget for FedCap is \$10,139,009 Block Grant and \$9,359,752 Block Grant for State Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021, respectively.

**List of block grants, total funds, and what each block grant currently funds.**

Please see attached plan for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant.

**DHHS MANAGEMENT**

**A-244: The costs in this initiative are rent. What are the moving costs?**

We expect moving costs to be approximately \$50,000.

**Is there an increase in the number of positions in DHHS after this budget? Are there changes to skill levels and pay levels?**

No, there is a net decrease of 1.5 full time employees.