



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2026

Legislative Document

No. 1996

S.P. 809

In Senate, December 5, 2025

An Act to Clarify Responsibilities of the State in the Laws Governing General Assistance

Submitted by the Department of Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Received by the Secretary of the Senate on December 3, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Services pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DAREK M. GRANT".

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator INGWERSEN of York.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §4323, sub-§6, as enacted by PL 2023, c. 575, §6, is repealed.

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §4327, first ¶, as enacted by PL 2023, c. 575, §7, is amended to read:

The department shall use municipal reports, data from the statewide online database required under section 4323, subsection 6 and other metrics to generate a general assistance report to be submitted to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over general assistance matters no later than January 30, 2026 and no later than January 30th of each odd-numbered calendar year thereafter. The initial report must include recommendations regarding a potential extension of the general assistance eligibility period beyond the 30-day limit established in section 4310, subsection 4. All reports must include metrics for: the number of individuals and families who received funds; the basic necessities for which those funds were provided; the length of time those funds were received; which municipalities accessed technical assistance and the number of times that technical assistance was requested, including instances outside of normal business hours; the type of technical assistance municipalities required; the number of calls to the department's general assistance hotline; and the number and content of complaints received and additional metrics as determined necessary by the department. The report must also include data illustrating municipal poverty levels, or regional or county poverty data when municipal-level poverty data is unavailable, and data regarding the use of other public benefit programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program in each municipality.

SUMMARY

This bill removes the requirement that the Department of Health and Human Services, beginning July 1, 2025, provide overseers of each municipality's general assistance program access to an Internet-based, real-time database containing the information necessary to properly determine eligibility of an applicant for general assistance. The bill also updates certain reporting requirements for the department.