

STEP Program

Program Overview

The STEP Program offers housing subsidy and security deposits to facilitate the rapid re-housing of individuals and families experiencing homelessness and participating in a housing stability program. MaineHousing collaborates with local service providers to assist in access to and delivery of the program in their community.

Income Eligibility/Length of Assistance

STEP offers rental assistance for a maximum of 24 months to individuals and families who are homeless and whose annual income is at or below 60% of area median income for their household size. Each participant will be required to pay 30% of their adjusted total household income toward rent each month.

Security and Utility Deposits

STEP may provide a security and/or utility deposit to assist participants in securing housing.

A one-time utility deposit may be provided under the STEP Program only if the tenant has been issued a rental assistance Coupon, the Unit selected by the tenant has passed inspection, and the tenant has entered into a lease with the Owner. Utility deposit assistance may be used only for utilities permitted under the Section 8 utility allowances, which includes electricity, gas, sewer and water, but does not include telephone, cable television and hook-up fees. Documentation from the utility company will be necessary in order to receive the utility deposit and it will be paid directly to the utility company.

The security deposit may be equal to or less than one month's rent. It will be paid directly to the landlord and is returned to the tenant at the end of their tenancy. Any retention of the security deposit, in whole or in part, by the landlord for unpaid rent and/or damages must be in accordance with State of Maine law.

Leasing Requirements

The initial term of the lease between the owner and the tenant will be for one year unless both parties agree to a shorter term. No lease, or lease renewal that proposes to increase the amount of rent or change utility responsibilities for the Unit being rented, will be effective during the initial term of rental assistance unless it has been approved in advance by MaineHousing.

Rental Assistance Payments

MaineHousing will issue rental assistance payments to owners, or their designated representative. Payments for move-ins with effective dates not on the first day of the month, will be pro-rated to reflect actual number of days the unit was occupied by the household during the first month. The owner will be paid on or about the first day of the month for which the rental payment is due.

The owner agrees that the owner's endorsement on the check will be conclusive evidence that the owner received the full amount due for the month, and will be a certification that:

1. The unit is in decent, safe and sanitary condition, and that the owner is providing the services, maintenance and utilities agreed to in the lease (including the Lease Addendum) for the unit.
2. The unit is leased to and occupied by the tenant named in the lease.
3. The owner has not received and will not receive any payments as rent for the unit other than those identified in the lease, or any amendments to the lease approved by MaineHousing.
4. To the best of the owner's knowledge, the unit is used solely as the tenant's principal residence.

For More Information, Contact:

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MaineHousing does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, 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, marital status, 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: Louise Patenaude, Maine State Housing Authority, 353 Water Street, Augusta, Maine 04330-4633, Telephone Number 1-800-452-4668 (voice in state only), (207) 626-4600 (voice) or Maine Relay 711.