



Maine Equal Justice

People Policy Solutions

## Rents are too high and evictions are rising in Maine, but an investment in rent relief would support people and communities while more homes are built

No matter our race, income, or zip code, we all want a safe, affordable place to live. Homes are **where we find opportunities** to learn, work, and build a life. But for many Mainers, a lack of affordable places to live and sky high rents are pulling their bank accounts into the red and threatening the roof over their heads.

Many people are paying half or more of their monthly income on rent. In 2023, **nearly 6,000 Maine households faced eviction**, an increase of 16% over the previous year, most for non-payment of rent.

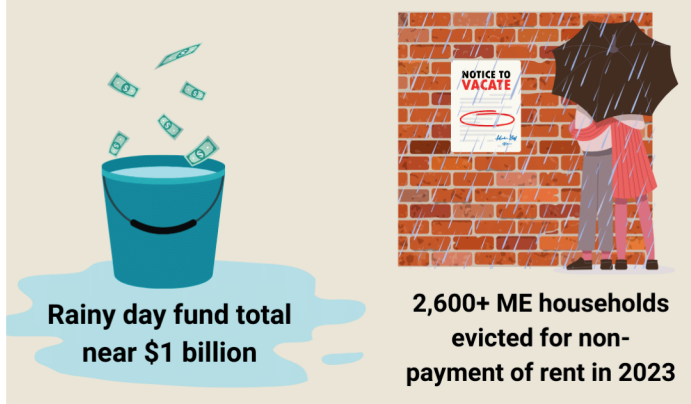
### People who have been hit hardest by rising rents need help now

Mainers who could benefit from targeted rent relief (those who earn **around \$28,000 a year**) include many single parents and caregivers, Mainers with disabilities, older Mainers on fixed incomes, workers who do essential but low-paying jobs, and students.

These rent-burdened Mainers will have to **wait years or even decades for enough affordable housing to be built** to meet the needs of our state. That's too long to wait when you are on the edge of eviction.

A **rent relief** program could immediately ease the financial burden for people whose incomes can't keep up with rapidly rising rents, and who

Rather than put another \$107 million into an **overflowing rainy day fund**, Augusta should target rent relief to **make housing affordable** and **stop evictions**.



are not being supported by other programs (like Housing Choice Vouchers, also known as Section 8).

### Legislators should fund rent relief in the budget

It's plain to see that families, cities and towns are struggling for housing solutions. Fortunately, the state has a **significant surplus**, and an investment in rent relief can help **alleviate growing pressure** on emergency shelters and local General Assistance programs.

Maine has **space and resources for everyone** to thrive. Rent relief is one measure we need to ensure more families and communities can meet this housing moment.