



MAINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION

THE UNMET NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN MAINE

York-Cumberland Counties:

Avesta Housing is Maine's largest non-profit housing agency. It manages 1,298 units in 47 properties throughout York and Cumberland counties. About 2/3 of those units are for seniors. **The current waiting list, for all of Avesta's properties combined, is 5,904 households.** The turnover rate is about 18% per year, which will allow the agency to serve about 233 of the households that are on its waiting list right now. That leaves 5,671 households (about 96% of the waiting list) unserved at Avesta alone, without contemplating the many additional households likely to add their names to the waiting list in the future. As an example, there are 130 families on the waiting list for Pearl Place (a 60-unit project in Portland for families). 97 of those families are seeking a 1-br unit, 19 are seeking a 2-br unit and 14 are seeking a 3-br unit. Only 2 units have turned over in the past year since the project opened in December of 2007.

Brunswick:

Brunswick Housing Authority (BHA) has 276 housing units in its portfolio and **currently has a waiting list of 260 households (425 individuals) for those units.** This list includes 130 elderly-only households and a total of 125 children. 54 of the 260 households on the waiting list include a disabled person.

BHA also administers 453 Section 8 vouchers and **currently maintains a waiting list of 409 households (741 people) for those vouchers.** This list includes at least 192 disabled persons and 242 children.

Auburn:

Auburn Housing Authority has 393 housing units (plus 17 currently in development) and administers 590 Section 8 vouchers, for a total of 1,000 units. **The waiting list is currently at 1,516 households** and turnover is about 200 households per year, leaving about 87% of applicants unserved within the next year. Turnover typically declines in a poor economy, so these numbers may worsen in the next several months.

Bangor:

Penquis has seven affordable housing projects in its portfolio, five of which are in Penobscot County and two of which are in Waldo County. Three of these projects are for seniors and four are for families, providing a total of 150 units. Penquis generally experiences a 10% turnover rate for its units and **currently maintains a waiting list of 135 households,** which means that the agency will only serve 13 or 14 additional households over the next year and 120 households will remain on the waiting list. The greatest need for families is for 3-bedroom units, but many will opt for a 2-bedroom unit so as to incur less rental cost.

Additionally, Penquis Housing Services administers 703 Section 8 vouchers. These vouchers serve Penobscot, Piscataquis, Waldo, and Knox Counties. **There are 1,640 households on the waiting list for these vouchers.** The list would likely be much larger, but MaineHousing has kept the Penobscot County waiting list closed for the past 1.5 years. The turnover rate for the previous 12 months was 197 units, or 28% of the total voucher portfolio.

C & C Realty:

C&C Realty manages 499 units in 36 properties throughout Franklin, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Sagadahoc, Somerset, Waldo and Washington counties. Just over half of its units are for seniors. **The current unduplicated waiting list, for all of its properties combined, is 446 households.** C&C Realty has a turnover rate of about 15% per year, which means that this year it will be able to serve about 90 of the households currently on its waiting list while leaving 409 households unserved. As an example, there are 39 families on the waiting list for Pinewood Apartments (a 16-unit project in Madison for seniors and families). 15 of those applicants are seeking a 1BR unit, 7 are seeking a 2BR unit and 17 are seeking a 3BR unit. Only 2 units have turned over in the past year.

Realty Resources:

Realty Resources Management has 1,114 units in 39 properties throughout Maine. About 45% of its units are for seniors. **The current unduplicated waiting list, for all of its properties combined, is 966 households.** Realty Resources has a turnover rate of about 19% per year, which means that this year it will be able to serve about 211 of the households currently on its waiting list while leaving 755 households unserved. As an example, there are 73 households on the waiting list for Freese's Building (a 34-unit project in Bangor for seniors). Given the average turnover rate of 19%, only 6 of these 73 households are expected to be served this year.

Statewide:

- In 2008, the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition engaged the Maine Center for Economic Policy to undertake an analysis of the Section 8 program in Maine. The report found that there are 11,930 households currently using Section 8 vouchers in Maine while another **11,511 households linger on one or more waiting list**, indicating that at least half of the Maine households that are both eligible and in need of housing assistance through Section 8 are not being served. It is also important to note that almost half of Maine's Section 8 waiting lists are closed, which keeps new people from applying. Housing authorities close their waiting lists when it is clear that they will no longer be able to serve applicants within a reasonable amount of time. The average wait time for an applicant who meets a local preference is 12 months if they are applying outside of MaineHousing's jurisdiction (if a family is homeless, MaineHousing gives them preference and they may be placed within a month). For people that do not meet the criteria used in a preference system or who are applying to a housing authority that does not use a preference system, the wait for a voucher can be anywhere from a year to an indefinite amount of time.
- The American Community Survey (by the U.S. Census Bureau) shows that **Maine has only 52 units of affordable rental housing available for every 100 extremely low income renters.** There are about 37,000 extremely low income renter households in Maine.

Homelessness:

750-800 people stay in emergency homeless shelters in Maine *on any given night*, and **over 7,000 different people stay in Maine's emergency shelters over the course of a year.** Worse, these shelter statistics do not tell us how many Mainers are sleeping outside, in cars, in campgrounds, or on the sofas of friends and family members – they speak only to the numbers of people who knew about and chose to go to one of Maine's shelters. The true number of individuals who experience homelessness in Maine every year is unknown.