

Augusta project to receive \$500,000 for homeless housing

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By JASON PAFUNDI Staff Writer

The Maine State Housing Authority Wednesday awarded \$500,000 to an Augusta project as part an overall \$1.25 million pledge to aid the state's homeless.

The Augusta project is located at 1 Noyes Court and includes four one-bedroom units that will be used as permanent housing for people who are homeless, according to a press release.



This property at 1 Noyes Court in Augusta, shown in a photo taken Wednesday, will be developed into housing for the homeless. Staff photo by Andy Molloy

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The funds will be used by Community Housing of Maine to purchase and renovate the existing property. Community housing submitted a proposal to MaineHousing for financing which was approved, said Deborah Turcotte, public information manager of MaineHousing.

Community Housing Executive Director Cullen Ryan said the Portland-based agency is anxious to move as fast as they can to make the property livable.

"We look forward to making this into high-quality housing for folks that need it," Ryan said. "We will make it a place anyone would feel proud to call their home."

Ryan said the renovations include updating and modernizing the interiors of the units and making the building as energy efficient as possible. There will be an application process for determining who will live in each unit, though Ryan could not say when that would begin.

“This was the first step, and we are really pleased that MaineHousing has endorsed this project and is allowing it to reach eventual completion,” he said. “It is fantastic news for Augusta.”

The other projects include another \$500,000 to community housing for a building on Cumberland Avenue in Portland that also contains four, one-bedroom units, and \$250,000 for a property on Maple Street in Milbridge awarded to Washington-Hancock Community Agency.

“MaineHousing is committed to ending chronic homelessness in Maine, especially among our veterans,” said MaineHousing Director John Gallagher in the release. “This financing helps ten individuals have a home of their own in their communities, plus receive the supportive services they need from our partners.”

Turcotte said the funding is contingent on design approval and the satisfaction of the local approval process.

MaineHousing also announced Wednesday that it received \$54,031 as part of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s award of \$75 million in grants to Family Self-Sufficiency Programs nationwide. Eight public housing authorities in Maine were awarded a total of \$439,537, including the Augusta Housing Authority, which received \$32,484.

Maine’s Family Self-Sufficiency Program helps residents increase their earning potential, improve their financial literacy, reduce or eliminate the need for welfare assistance and make progress toward economic independence and self-sufficiency, according to the federal agency.

Other local authorities receiving grants include Portland, Lewiston, Bangor, Westbrook, Old Town, Brewer and Caribou.

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