

# Portland Housing NEWSLETTER

## FALL EDITION

SEPTEMBER 2024

### R A B!

**Get involved! Join PHA's  
Resident Advisory Board**

### UPDATES ON PROGRAMS

It's apple picking  
season. Find a U-Pick  
near you

### Winter is Coming...

Learn about utility and heat  
programs to get through the  
cold season.

**TAX Preparation  
Services at PHA**

**Things are happening  
at your local health  
center**

**Tired of paper?  
Get PHA Notifications**

**IMPORTANT VOTER  
INFORMATION  
INSIDE!**



PORTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

Resident Services Department



# Fall Message

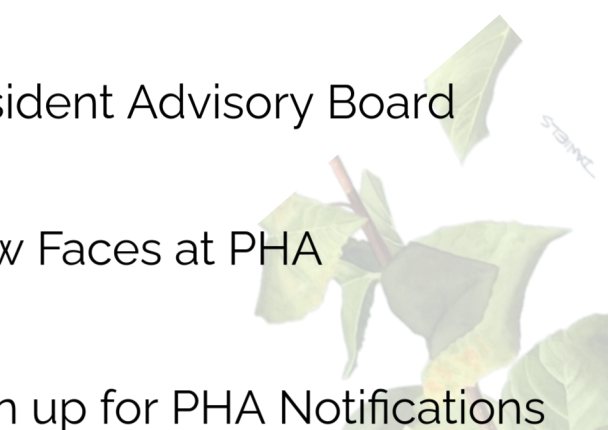
Fall in Maine is, in my opinion, the most beautiful time of year. And, fall approaches, we enter the holiday season. That means costumes, family dinners and gift giving. It also means colder temperatures and the start of the heating season. This is also an election year, so this fall will be particularly eventful. We hope the information shared in this quarterly newsletter will give you some ideas about how to navigate the season change successfully and provides you with important voter information as you prepare to go to the polls. We'd also like to introduce you to a new face at PHA, update on what's happening in our study centers and look a little further down the line toward TAX season, because it's never too early to get ready for Tax time. Happy fall, everyone!



Director of Resident Services

## Here's what you'll find in this issue...

September 2024

- Fall Calendar
  - Get Ready for the Heating Season
  - Important Voter Information
  - Health Center News
  - Apple Picking, TAX Preparation at PHA & Art Exhibition
  - PHA Savings Program
  - Food Share Information
  - Resident Advisory Board
  - New Faces at PHA
  - Sign up for PHA Notifications
- 



# Coming this Autumn...

*Look for  
flyers about  
holiday  
events or  
community  
meals in your  
neighborhood  
this fall*



## OCTOBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	Portland Public Schools closed	12
13	Offices Closed Indigenous People's Day	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	Halloween	

## NOVEMBER 2024

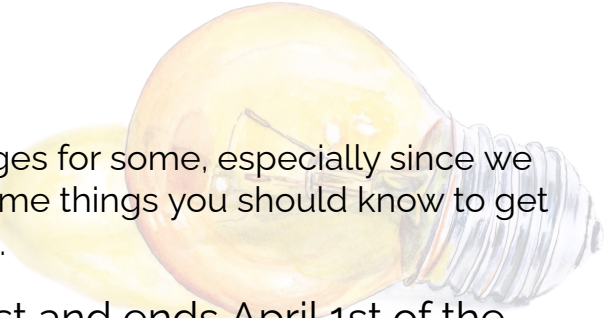
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
Daylight Savings Time Ends	4	Election Day	6	7	8	9
10	Offices Closed Veteran's Day	12	13	14	15	16
17		19	20	21	22	23
24		25	26	Portland Public Schools closed	Offices Closed Thanksgiving	Offices Closed

## DECEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
FAFSA application available	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	Offices Close early Christmas eve	Offices Closed Christmas	26	27	28
29	30	31	Winter Break for Portland Public Schools			



# Winter is coming... Do you pay for electricity?



With the coming colder weather comes financial challenges for some, especially since we stay in more and may rely on electricity more. Here are some things you should know to get through the cold months.

The official start to the heating season is October 1st and ends April 1st of the following year.. Did you know that during this time the average household's electricity bill increases by 26%. That can amount to hundreds of dollars by the end of winter. In Maine, The heating season also means that legally, electricity companies cannot disconnect customers. However, fall and winter can mean hardships for households, especially if people fall behind on payments. So, what do you do if you fall behind? The first thing is to contact CMP. CMP has several programs to help customers keep the lights on and manage your bill.

## **SimplePay**

SimplePay lets you make a stable monthly payment based on your average monthly electricity usage over the past year. That means, you'll get a bill for the same amount each month, so you'll always know what your bill will be.

## **Get Usage Alerts**

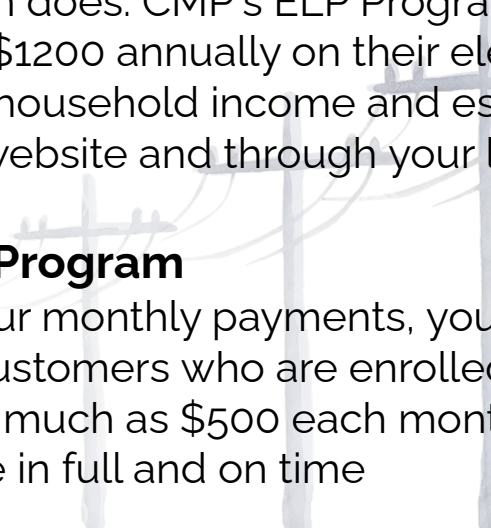
Would you like to know how much and the cost of electricity you've used before the bill comes ? Now you can with Usage Alerts. Sign up online then text USAGE to 267898 and receive a message with the amount and cost of electricity used through the prior day. Would something like this help you keep costs down?

## **Electricity Lifeline Program (ELP)**

Sometimes what we need is a little assistance to make our dollars go further. That's what the ELP program does. CMP's ELP Program offers qualified customers a credit of up to \$1200 annually on their electric bill. The amount of your ELP credit is based on household income and estimated electricity usage. You can apply on the CMP website and through your local HEAP program.

## **Arrearage Management Program**

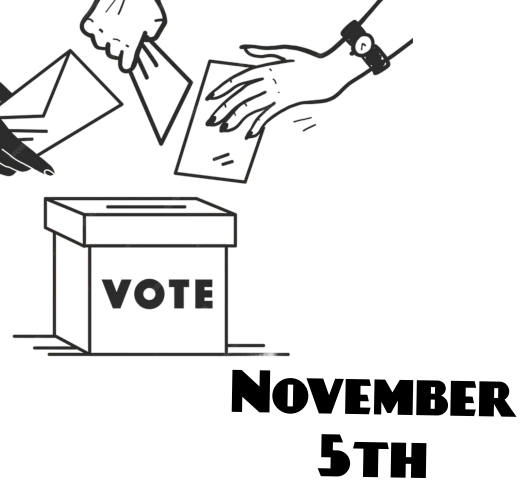
If you've fallen behind on your monthly payments, you will want to consider this program. It helps qualified customers who are enrolled in HEAP or ELP reduce their past due balance by as much as \$500 each month, as long as current monthly payments are made in full and on time





# For you, The Voter

2024 is a big election year and there is some basic voter information we would like to share with you,



**NOVEMBER  
5TH**

**To vote in Maine, here are the basic rules you need to follow:**

- You must be a U.S. citizen.
- You must be 18 years old.
- You also need to live in the town or city in Maine where you want to register.

**How do I register to vote?** In Maine you can register to vote in a few different ways.

- You can register online by October 15th at <https://registertovote.sos.maine.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration/Registration>
- You can fill out a voter registration form and mail it. It must be received by October 15.
- You can register in person on election day!

## **What is a Voting Residence?**

A voting residence is the place you call home and plan to return to if you leave temporarily. You can prove this by showing things like where you live, where you get your mail, or the address on your driver's license.

## **Special Situations**

If you are a student, you can register to vote where your school is if that's your main home, like a dorm or apartment.

If you are in the military, you don't lose your voting home just because you're stationed somewhere else.

Did you know Maine is one of two states where citizens never lose the right to vote? Even if you're in jail you still have the right to vote where you lived before.

Even if you don't have a traditional home or are unhoused, you can still register to vote by describing where you stay.

# News from Greater Portland Health

Did you know Portland Housing is host to 3 Greater Portland Health Clinics? They located in Riverton Park, Sagamore Village and Franklin Towers and are open to all PHA and community residents.

## RIVERTON CLINIC WILL BE OPEN MORE HOURS!

We are so excited to expand our Riverton Park clinic's hours beginning in September, and are adding even more hours starting in October. We remain closed on Wednesdays. To schedule an appointment, stop by to see us or call our main office at 207-874-2141. WE ARE ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS!

### New Hours of Operation for September in Riverton

- Monday: 8:30am – 4:30 pm (Anthony)
- Tuesday: 8am - 4:30 pm (Brad)
- Wednesday - CLOSED
- Thursday: 8am – 4:30pm (Brad)
- Friday: 8am - 3:30pm (Brad) – these hours are being added on October 1st!

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW HEALTHCARE PROVIDER!**  
**BIENVENU PRESTATAIRE DE SOINS!**  
**BEM-VINDO PRESTADOR DE CUIDADOS DE SAÚDE!**



### BRAD SMITH, PA-C!

Bradley Smith earned his Master of Physician Assistant Studies at the University of New England and Bachelor of Arts from Dickinson College. He has 15 years of experience working with patients of all ages in the Greater Portland area. Bradley looks forward to serving the Riverton Park and Sagamore Village communities and providing excellent, timely care. In his free time, he enjoys reading, triathlons, and exploring new places with his wife and family.

## Community Influenza (Flu) Vaccine Clinics Coming in October

We will offer flu vaccine clinics to the community in early October. You can come to a clinic even if you are not a patient of GPH. Getting vaccinated in October ensures your vaccine can give you and your family the best protection from influenza from October through March, when the virus is most active in Maine.

- **Sagamore Tuesday 10/8, 1-4pm**
- **Franklin Thursday 10/10, 830-11am**
- **Riverton on Wednesday 10/16 from 1-4pm**

## Flu and COVID Vaccines for GPH Patients

If you or your child is a GPH primary care patient, flu vaccine will be available at all appointments in mid-September. COVID vaccines have not yet arrived, but we hope to have them available in late September or early October. Call our main office at 207-874-2141 to make a vaccine appointment at the Riverton Park clinic or at the 180 Park Avenue clinic, which has a vaccine clinic every Wednesday from 8am-12pm.

# Future Events

## It's Apple Picking Season

Apple picking a New England tradition, and you don't have to go too far to find orchards where you and friends and family can spend an afternoon tasting new apples and picking enough to make goodies. Here are some nearby locations.

- Maxwell's Farm

Two Lights Rd, Bowery Beach Rd,  
Cape Elizabeth, 04107

- Sweetser's Apple Barrel and Orchards

19 Blanchard Rd, Cumberland,  
04021

- Hansel's Orchard

44 Sweetser Rd, North Yarmouth,  
04097

- Orchard Ridge Farm

236 Sebago Lake Rd., Gorham,  
04038

Happy Apple Picking

## 2025 Tax Season

Some of you may not know that PHA works with our friends at the CA\$H Program to offer free tax preparation. This service is to open all residents and community members. Just like in year's past, onsite tax services will be offered at both Riverton Park and Sagamore Village. Look for information in the future about how to sign up for an appointment.

CA\$H is also looking for volunteers, so if you're looking for a volunteer opportunity, contact Teyonda Hall at 207-221-8003 for more information.

## Art Exhibition 2025

The 2024 PHA Connections Art Exhibition was so successful, we're doing it again. 51 artists exhibited work at Mayo Street Arts in May and June of this year. We're grateful all the community support we received and all the artists who celebrate our local talent with us. So, all you artists out there,, be on the look out for future opportunities to register for the 2025 exhibition.



# PHA's Family Self-Sufficiency Program, a Savings Program

PHA has been operating this savings program for over a decade and we want to make it available to more people. But instead of us telling you about it, we'll like you to hear from one of our participants.

## **Delice's Story**

Delice is a recent FSS graduate. She came to Portland, Maine from Rwanda with her family. Like many people who come from other countries, she gave up the life she knew to find a place of safety. But she didn't speak English, so she went to adult education and graduated from the English Language Program and after a few years, she was able to move into public housing. Delice and her family embraced the challenges they faced and worked hard. After becoming more fluent in English, she decided it was time work on her career goals. She went to SMCC and completed a CRMA certificate, which allowed her to work in the healthcare sector. But things were still challenging. Delice said, "I had a hard time saving money to accomplish my goals and I wanted to start a business." That's when she joined the FSS program.

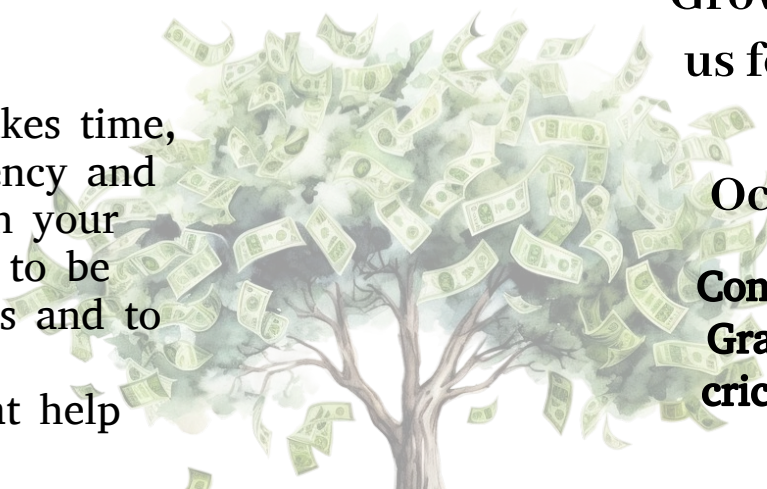
## **How did the program help Delice?**

When asked how the program helped her, she said, "the program helped me save money. I completed my goals and it didn't take long to do it." With the program's assistance, Delice also started a home health business and increased her earnings.

## **What would Delice say to anyone considering the FSS program?**

Do it. "I wish everyone knew about the FSS program. It's a big thing and so helpful. I want to [re-enroll] again."

Getting ahead takes time, patience consistency and having people on your side. We're here to be your cheerleaders and to connect you to opportunities that help you get ahead.



**Grow your savings. Join  
us for our next virtual  
Info Session!**

**October 9th @ 5PM**

**Contact: Calshir Richerson,  
Grants Program Manager  
[cricherson@porthouse.org](mailto:cricherson@porthouse.org)  
207-221-8069**

# Sagamore Village Food Share

The Sagamore Village Food Pantry has a new name. To reflect the real value of this food service to the neighborhood, we're using a new term, Food Share. A food share is just what it sounds like. It takes extra food from the community and distributes it to households who are trying to stretch their food budgets. This is where PHA residents can get farm fresh produce, meat, milk and fruits to make healthy meals.

In Sagamore Village, the food share has been run by Marilyn Pierce for the last 9 years! She and her volunteers have worked hard to keep the food share going even through the pandemic and are still hard at work ensuring that quality food gets delivered to the neighborhood every Tuesday from 9am to 10am.

## Volunteer with the Food Share

If you're interested in helping out, the Food Share is looking for volunteers from the community.

**Food share Hours: Tuesdays, 9am to 10am**

# Back to School Backpacks

362 backpacks were distributed to PHA subsidized housing residents and participants at the end of August 2024.

- 150 packed backpacks were donated by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Cumberland County 4-H program
- 40 packed bags were donated by the Portland Police through Community Policing
- 240 bags were purchased and filled with supplies by Portland Housing Authority
- 20 Binders and filler paper was donated by Maine Needs
- Remaining backpacks will be distributed next August or given to families in need.

# 2024 Scholarship Program

- The Scholarship Program has been renamed to the Thomas Valteau Scholarship starting in 2025
- awards ranged from \$1,000 to \$5,000
- \$37,000 was distributed to 15 awardees:
  - ⦿ 6 to east bayside neighborhoods
  - ⦿ 3 to Front Street East
  - ⦿ 3 to Voucher Program Participants
  - ⦿ 2 to Riverton park
  - ⦿ 1 to Sagamore Village

# The Root Cellar Food Share Group

Sharing food and growing community

If you're looking for a way to get involved in your local community AND want more fresh foods, breads and protein, consider The Root Cellars Food Share program. This group is composed of community members, just like you, who want more fresh foods and to save money. Here's how it works.

1. Sign up and pay the \$5 annual fee
2. Join a volunteer distribution group. Group 1 meets 11am to 1pm every other Friday and Group 2 meets 1pm to 3pm every other Friday.
3. Choose your food items and take them home.

Food shares are a local tradition. It's a way to share the bounty with your neighbors while feeding you and yours.

For more information about the Food Share and the Root Cellar to

[www.therootcellar.org](http://www.therootcellar.org)

## Join the Resident Advisory Board

Portland Housing Authority is looking for residents who are interested in sharing their resident experience and support the wider resident community. We're looking for residents of all ages, and backgrounds, whether you live in our housing communities or have a voucher to help us improve our processes, come up with resident-centered ideas and plan events. The commitment is minimal.

- Members must be able to attend 4-6 meetings a year.
- Membership on the board comes with a stipend of \$100 for each meeting you attend.
- Members must be and stay in good standing with PHA.

If you're interested in this opportunity, or just have questions, contact Teyonda Hall, Director of Resident Services, at [thall@porthouse.org](mailto:thall@porthouse.org) or call 207-221-8003

**Get  
Involved!**



Portland Housing Authority would like to welcome

# New Resident Services VISTA Volunteer, Max

Max Van Osdol has joined the Resident Services Team at Portland Housing Authority as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer to help us understand more about access to affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate food in our communities. Through his service, he will help us bring equity, consistency, and support to programs and services to make sure everyone has access to affordable and healthy foods long term.

Expect to see him around your community this year as he seeks your input on food access and resources. He will have many conversations with individuals, groups, and seek your input on specific questions through a survey.

## Max Van Osdol (He/Him)

Food Security VISTA  
Ending Hunger Corps  
AmeriCorps Program

Tel: (207) 773-4753 x8264  
[mvanosdol@porthouse.org](mailto:mvanosdol@porthouse.org)



PORTLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY  
MAINE

# PHA NOTIFICATIONS

As part of our ongoing effort to increase quality communication with our residents, PHA has launched a notification system. This system will allow us to communicate about important things happening in your program, neighborhood or emergencies. You can choose to have alerts go to your phone or email. Our goal is to stay in touch! So, please, take a moment and sign up for the notification system.

Use the QR code to  
sign up

