

CHA Bulletin

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Caribou Housing Authority
25 High Street
Caribou ME 04736

www.caribouhousing.org

Lisa Plourde
Housing Director
lplourde@cariboumaine.org

Sue Ouellette
FSS & Homeownership
Coordinator
souellette@cariboumaine.org

Telephone:
(207) 493-4234

Fax:
(207) 376-0178

Hours:
Monday – Friday
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM



NEW LANDLORD PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

In 2020, over two thousand families and individuals used federally funded Vouchers to rent units throughout the Caribou Housing Authority's jurisdiction, bringing in over to \$948 thousand dollars into the local economy. However, several dozen more families and individuals struggled to find rental housing where they could use their vouchers in Caribou's area. Not being able to find housing put families at risk was a loss to the economy and contributed to the broader housing crisis, which can be found State-wide. The Maine Public Housing Authorities is committed to leveraging this significant federal investment towards meeting the housing needs of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, therefore partnering with Maine Housing Authority in creating the *Landlord Participation Incentive Program*.

The Landlord Participation Incentive Program aims to expand rental opportunities for family with a voucher by making landlord participation in the program more attractive, more feasible and streamlined. The goal of the program is to help those with housing vouchers successfully find a home by improving voucher utilization rates through increased landlord participation.

Landlord Participation Incentive Program offers: (more information coming soon)

- Landlord Repair Grants
- Security Deposit Assistance
- Damage Repairs Reimbursements
- Landlord Incentive Fees (aka Signing Bonus)

Join the combined efforts of the Caribou Housing Authority, Maine Public Housing Authorities, and Maine Housing Authority, by referring a friend and/or offering one more unit to a Voucher family.

To partner and get involved, contact Lisa Plourde at lplourde@cariboumaine.org or (207) 493-4234.

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Do you know someone who needs help paying their rent?
The Emergency Rental Assistance Program is still accepting applications.

For more information and/or apply go to:
<https://www.mainehousing.org/programs-services/rental/rentaldetail/covid-19-rental-relief-program>

BEWARE OF' FRAUDULENT ACTIVITY!



Caribou Housing is committed to protecting the integrity of Voucher Program. Our goal is to ensure eligible families and property owners are

participating in accordance with program regulations. Any knowledge of fraud should be reported immediately. Allegations will be kept confidential and investigated.

Examples of Fraud

- Landlords accepting housing assistance payments (HAP) on properties for which they are not the legal agent or do not own;
- Program participants having unauthorized occupants;
- Landlords accepting HAPs for vacant units;
- Offering bribes to public housing authority employees;
- Landlords requesting tenant payments more than the amount stated on the lease or HAP Contract;
- Renting to relatives without prior approval;
- Suspicion of drug use, drug dealing, or prostitution;
- Program participants receiving double rental subsidy.

All the examples listed above violate federal regulations and must be reported. You can notify us of fraudulent activity in person at our office, by email at housing@cariboumaine.org, or via phone at (207) 493-4234.

SUMMERTIME IS PEST TIME!

Just a reminder that with the warm weather, bugs start to appear in and around the apartments. To keep bugs to a minimum, it is important to follow some simple housekeeping rules:

- Limit where you eat. Contain food to the kitchen so that pests are not attracted to other areas of the unit.
- Keep your floors clean. Just a little spill will attract pests.
- Wash your dishes right away.
- Wipe up spills right away and be sure not leave any sticky residue.
- Report any slow drains. Pests look for a water source, and standing water will attract them.
- Dispose of fruits or vegetables that are past their prime. Overripe product will attract fruit flies!
- Remove garbage and recyclables daily in the warmer weather.
- Wipe down jars and bottles that you have used before putting them in the cupboard.

CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP

Please notify Caribou Housing immediately if you have sold your rental unit, hired a new property management company, or your contact information has changed.

ODDBALL HOLIDAYS TO CELEBRATE

July 15th – Gummy Worm Day
July 21st – June Food Day

August 3rd – Watermelon Day
August 7th – National Lighthouse Day
August 13th – National Left-handers Day
August 26th – Dog Appreciation Day



September 13th – Positive Thinking Day
September 15th – Make a Hat Day
September 17th – International Country Music Day
September 19th – International Talk Like a Pirate Day

TYPES OF RENTAL AGREEMENTS

Lease -vs- Tenancy at Will



The agreement you make with your landlord will affect what rights you will have.

Before you sign anything, be sure to read the agreement through carefully and understand it!

The written agreement you sign is called a “lease”.

<p>A lease <u>must</u> contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the names of the landlord and the tenant;• the address of the rental unit;• the length of the lease;• and the day the rent is due.	<p>Some leases <u>may</u> contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• security deposit – the amount and return of;• utilities – provided by the landlord and/or tenant;• furnishings – appliances provided• tenant responsibilities• landlord entry• building rules – i.e., smoking, pets, parking, peace and quiet, guest, etc.• breach of lease – i.e., non-payment of rent, damages, unauthorized guest, etc.
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If the tenant stays beyond the end of the lease term the tenant becomes a “month-to-month” tenant. This is called a “tenancy at will”.

Common Questions:

- **What kind of notice do I have to give if I am moving?**
 - Lease: Read to see what is stated in your lease.
 - Tenant at Will: You must give your landlord a 30-day written notice.
- **Can my landlord increase my rent?**
 - Lease: The landlord probably cannot increase the rent during the lease term. Read your lease to find out if it says something different.
 - Tenant at Will: Your landlord must give you a 45-day written notice of any rent increase.
- **Does my landlord have a reason to evict me?**
 - Lease: Your landlord can evict you for a breach in your lease (i.e., nonpayment of rent, damages to the unit, disturbing other tenants, etc.)
 - Tenant at Will: Your landlord can evict you without giving you a reason.
- **What happens if my landlord sells my building?**
 - Lease: You probably have the right to stay until the end of your lease term. Read your lease to find out if it says something different.
 - Tenant at Will: Your old tenancy will end.

(Per Pine Tree Legal, Rights of Tenants in Maine)

LANDLORDS' CORNER

How to Avoid Rent Abatement

Caribou Housing inspects units to ensure they are safe, decent, and sanitary. Inspectors confirm the unit does not pose as a risk to the tenant and has no issues left unaddressed.

After your unit has failed inspection once and the necessary repairs have not been completed within the required timeframe, it will fall into rent abatement. This means the unit is not in compliance with the Housing Quality Standard and the Owner's payment will be suspended and is not recoverable.

During rent abatement, per HUD regulation and Housing Policy, the tenant cannot pay the Housing's share of the rent that is being abated.

Before each appointment do a walk thru of the home, conducting your own inspection. Giving yourself enough time to get any necessary repairs completed prior to the inspection by the Housing Authority.

If you have specific questions, feel free to contact the Caribou Housing Authority at housing@cariboumaine.org

DO YOU HAVE A VACANT UNIT?

We can help you advertise

If you have a vacant unit suitable for the Voucher Program and are interested in making it available to eligible households, contact us directly for an internal listing at:

(207) 493-4234 or
housing@cariboumaine.org.

Caribou Housing does not refer program participants to you specifically. Rather, we provide the families with a list of known available units. If the family is interested in your unit they will contact you directly.

It is up to the owner to conduct a suitability check.



FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY OF CARIBOU, CODE ENFORCEMENT

The further we get into summer, the more complaints the City of Caribou is receiving regarding garbage and tall grass. Per the City of Caribou Property Maintenance Code:

Maintenance: “No yard shall have an accumulation in the open of discarded or disused machinery, household appliances, automobile parts or bodies, logs, tree trunks and branches, construction materials, unusable toys, other plastics, wood, metals or other materials in a manner conducive to harboring of rats, mice, snakes, or vermin or growth of vegetation so accumulated, or in a manner creating fire, health, or safety hazards of the accumulation.

Every owner or occupant of real property in the city shall keep cut the grass and weeds to a height of no more than 7 inches, and be responsible for the removal and disposal of dead or diseased trees thereon the property, abutting boulevard, and/or portion of the street reserved for sidewalk abutting the property.”

Penalties: “Any person who violates any provision of this Ordinance commits a civil violation punishable by a civil penalty of \$100 for each day the violation continues allotted correction period of no more than 30 days from the date of the receipt of the notice.”.



IS YOUR UNIT READY FOR INSPECTION?

For a unit to qualify for a Voucher Program, it must pass the Housing Quality Standards (HQS) Inspection. This process ensures the unit meets the minimum standards of health and safety, as determined by Caribou Housing Authority.

The inspector assesses the unit for potential hazards (health and safety) and not cosmetic issues. As the owner and tenant, it is beneficial to be aware of needed repairs to address before it becomes a problem. Why? Because it can help prevent costly damage and protects the investment.

To guide one in this process, Caribou Housing Authority has prepared a basic Inspections Checklist that should be used before the inspection and during the tenancy. Below are questions to address commonly failed items and if your answer is “yes” to the questions below, you are closer to passing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the unit (building and apartment) properly numbered? (911 purpose) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all doors properly installed and not deteriorating, coming apart?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all outlets installed and wired property? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all doors leading to exterior weather tight? (no light coming through)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all outlets, within 6’ of a water source, GFCI protected? (GFCI outlet will trip when tested with electrical tester) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is all flooring free from holes, cracks, tripping hazards?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all outlets, light switches, junction boxes, and breaker boxes properly covered? (no cracked, loose, missing or broken covers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all interior & exterior surfaces free of any holes, peeling paint, deteriorated wood or loose bricks/mortar? Includes storage sheds)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all light fixtures properly wired, no loose or hanging fixtures? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all exterior surfaces free from falling hazards (loose/ hanging gutters, falling shingles)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all light fixtures have a proper light shade, if made to have one? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all windows free of cracked, broken or missing glass pane?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the breaker box properly covered with no open spaces between breakers? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all windows accessible from the outside properly locking?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the bathtub surface free of any deterioration? (peeling paints, rusted or broken/cracked surfaces) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all windows designed to open and close working properly? Does the window stay open when open, on its own?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the bathroom have a working exhaust fan (if no openable window is present)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all windows accessible for egress?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do all sinks have a proper gas trap? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a working hard-wired & battery powered smoke detector on each floor level?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all burner knobs and oven handle present and properly installed? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a line-voltage and battery powered carbon monoxide detector in the unit?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are all burner and oven elements working properly? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a graspable handrail and guardrail on all stairs (when 3 or more steps)?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrigerator – is the seal on the refrigerator properly secured, not hanging/coming off? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the furnace/boiler been serviced by a licensed technician within the past 12 months?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the hot water heater have a T&P valve with proper overflow pipe? 	

DID YOU REMEMBER TO REPORT YOUR CHANGES?

To be able to assist participants in an efficient and timely manner, the Housing Authority requires that participants report **ALL** changes to their household:

The following updates must be reported in writing:

- Request to add a new household member
- Household member moved out
- New household income
- Increase/decrease in household income

Any/all changes must be reported to the Caribou Housing Authority ***within 10 days*** of the change/addition. Failure to report the change within a timely manner could result in a breach in your Family Obligations, and possible termination of your Voucher.

For more information, contact the Caribou Housing Authority.

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