

Belfast considers plan that would support families facing housing insecurity

If approved, it would support up to four families who are facing housing insecurity.



Author: Katie Delaney

Published: 11:51 AM EST January 13, 2025

Updated: 5:08 PM EST January 13, 2025

BELFAST, Maine — [Midcoast Maine Homelessness Coalition](#) aims to establish Belfast's first transitional housing program.

The nonprofit has proposed converting part of the Belfast United Methodist Church into housing for families in need.

If approved, the program would use the lower level of the church to house up to four families at a time, with a total capacity of about 15 people.

The focus is exclusively on families who are [experiencing housing insecurity](#).

Kathy Muzzy, the chair of the coalition's board of directors, said there is a great need for transitional housing in the area.

"A lot of families, their housing is pretty precarious," Muzzy explained, with some families living in cars, rooming with other families, or being unable to afford increases in rent.

"There's a stigma that goes along with not having a traditional home to live in, you know, so people try to hide it," Muzzy said.

The coalition plans to hire staff to assist families during their transition to help them get back on their feet.

Services would include job placement help, access to health resources, meals, and transportation.

"We're trying to help people identify what they need to change so that they can have stable housing," Muzzy said.

Joe Calista serves as the chair of trustees for Belfast United Methodist Church. He released a statement, calling the program "unique to this part of Maine" and said it could "foster a new approach to aiding families in the middle of a housing crisis."

The proposal is under review by the Belfast City Council.

Mayor Eric Sanders expressed optimism about the project, saying it would be an opportunity to help community members who need it most.

“What a great idea, and I’m really glad that the church and this group are going to be giving it a trial run over there,” Sanders said.

Belfast currently lacks a homeless shelter or designated transitional housing.

Muzzy said this program, if approved, would be a significant step toward decreasing the number of families in the area facing housing insecurity.

“We are kind of excited that this is kind of a little groundbreaking kind of program, and we're hoping that we can expand it,” Muzzy said.

The Belfast City Council plans to continue discussing the proposed transitional housing at its next meeting. Then, it will be up to the planning board to approve.