



CCSM Issues Development Subcommittee Final Board Approved 10/28/2022

Access to Car Repair Services for people meeting the Federal Poverty Guidelines

**The Issue:**

Many people struggle to maintain a vehicle when living on a low income. When choosing between food, housing, and other basic needs, owning and maintaining a vehicle is often out of reach because car repairs can be costly and there are not enough resources to help with expensive repairs.

This is an important issue to address because when people have access to their own transportation, they become more self-reliant and are better able to meet their own medical and other transportation needs. Additionally, they can transport family and friends which builds community and reduces the strain on the public transportation system.

**Recommendations:**

1. Encourage DHHS to work with interested State Community College Automotive Programs to prioritize Mainers needing car repairs who meet the federal poverty guidelines.
2. Encourage DHHS to work with interested Regional High School Automotive Programs to develop ways for people to gain access to car repairs.
3. Encourage DHHS to partner with United Way agencies to expand programs like Don't Despair Car Repair Program: [Don't Despair Car Repair Program - UWTVA](#).
4. Provide information about the specific programs that fund car repairs for those who are in the TANF program. [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families \(TANF\) | Department of Health and Human Services \(maine.gov\)](#).
5. DHHS to support local libraries' efforts to loan basic tools needed to do DIY car repair. For example, [Equipment Lending & Passes — Bangor Public Library](#), [Resources - Norway Memorial Library](#) have lending equipment resources.
6. Veterans' groups [Financial Assistance for Veterans and Service Members: Bureau of Maine Veterans' Services](#).



7. Recommend that a coalition be developed by DHHS to create a guide that includes statewide and regional specific resources. This would help people who are struggling to navigate the maze of small organizations doing this kind of work. A plan to maintain the document needs to be created. Although DHHS has put a lot of resources into 211, we continue to hear that it is hard to navigate so people just do not go to them. This is why a guide is needed.

DHHS will disseminate this guide to service providers to help the people they serve.

The other fix could be a model for 211 that is a user friendly and people feel confident in using.

### **Expected outcomes**

By having a safe and reliable vehicle especially in rural parts of Maine opens up a myriad of opportunities for self-reliance and freedom including personal safety to be in charge of your own life; including work, school, family supports, healthcare access, volunteering, spiritual care and many more. If people had their own vehicles they would be saving the State funds for transportation as well as the decrease in needs for mental health care as we all know how stressful it can be to not know how you are going to get from point A to B on a constant basis.