

# Benefit, Employment & Support Services Division (BESSD) Homeless Programs Office Overview

House Committee on Health & Homelessness  
Informational Briefing  
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# DHS Overview: Four Divisions

**OUR VISION:** The people of Hawai'i are thriving.

**OUR MISSION:** To encourage self-sufficiency and support the well being of individuals, families, and communities in Hawai'i.

## **BESSD**

Financial Assistance  
SNAP  
Low Income Home Energy Assistance  
Child Care Subsidies  
Child Care Licensing  
Employment Training & Support  
Homeless Programs

## **MQD**

Medical Insurance Coverage (Medicaid)  
Premium Subsidy  
Long Term Care  
Aged, Blind & Disabled  
Health Analytics Program (including All Payers Claim Data Warehouse)

## **DVR**

Independent Living Programs  
State Rehabilitation Council  
Ho'opono Services for the Blind  
Employment Training

## **SSD**

Child Welfare Services  
Domestic Violence Programs  
Adult Protective Services  
Chore Services  
Senior Companion Program  
Respite Companion Program  
Foster Grandparent Program  
Transportation Assistance for Resident Aliens and Naturalized Citizens  
Courtesy Services

# Attached Agencies & Commissions

Hawaii Public Housing  
Authority

State Commission on the  
Status of Women

Office of Youth Services

State Commission on  
Fatherhood

Youth Correctional  
Facility/ Kawaihoa Youth  
& Family Wellness

Youth Commission

Statewide Office on  
Homelessness and  
Housing Solutions

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual,  
Transgender Queer, Plus  
Commission

# BESSD Programs

Supplemental  
Nutrition  
Assistance  
Program (SNAP)

General Assistance  
Program (GA)

Assistance for the  
Aged, Blind and  
Disabled (AABD)

Temporary  
Assistance to  
Needy Families  
(TANF)

First To Work  
Programs (FTW)

SNAP Employment  
and Training  
(SNAP E&T)

Low Income Home  
Energy Assistance  
Program (LIHEAP)

Child Care  
Subsidies (CCS)

Child Care  
Licensing (CCL)

Homeless  
Programs (HP)

# Homeless Programs Office (HPO)

## Program ID HMS224

- Administers a range of homeless service contracts with the common goal of connecting persons experiencing homelessness to permanent housing and supporting their long-term stay in housing.
- Contracted services include shelter, outreach, rapid rehousing, permanent supportive housing (including Housing First), housing placement, and civil legal services.
- Provides homelessness-related technical support and assistance to contracted homeless service providers.
- Member of the Hawaii Interagency Agency Council on Homelessness.

# HMS224: Overview of Homeless Services

State Homeless  
Outreach  
Programs

State Homeless  
Outreach Programs –  
Legal Services

State Homeless  
Shelter Program

State Homeless  
Rapid Re-Housing  
Program

State Homeless  
Permanent Supportive  
Housing / Housing  
First Program

State Homeless  
Emergency Grants  
Program

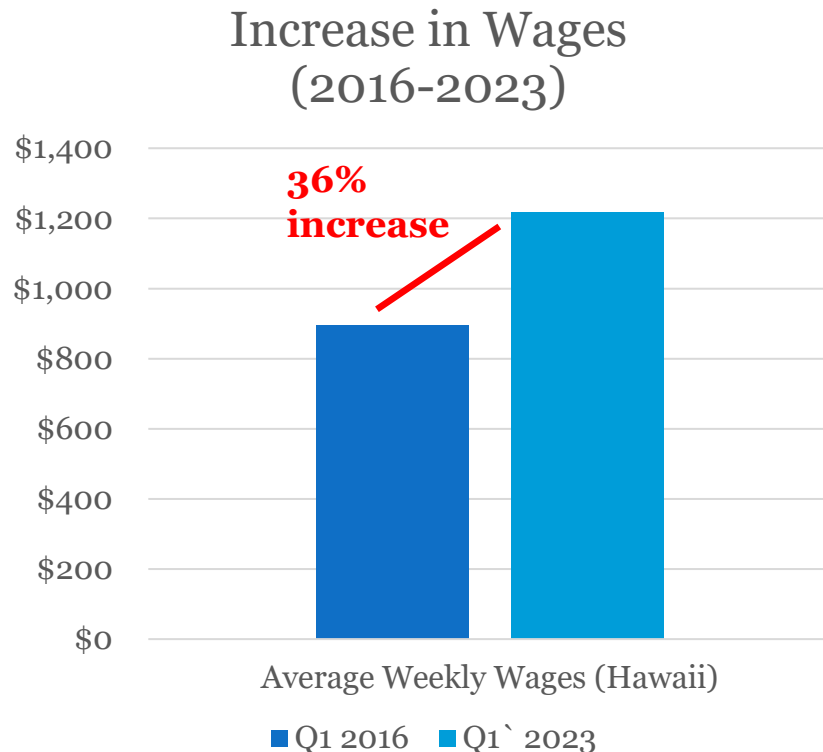
Housing  
Placement  
Program (TANF  
Funded)

Housing Opportunities  
for Persons with AIDS  
(Federal Program)

Emergency  
Solutions Grant  
(Federal Program)

# KEY CHALLENGE:

## Cost of Services Increases, as Funding Remains Flat



- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, average weekly wages increased 36% between 2016 and 2023.
- The base funding for Homeless Services has remained level during this period; it has not increased.
- Costs for transportation and rent also increased between 33-37% during this period.
- \$10.8M in funding for homeless services is not in the base budget and is funded only for the fiscal biennium.
- The 2023 statewide PIT count showed a 4% increase (250 people) compared to the prior year.

# Summary of HMS224 Contracted Services.

- **State Homeless Shelter Program (17 agencies – 15 emergency shelters, 15 transitional shelters).**

Provide emergency and/or transitional shelter to increase stability in the health, housing, and social areas so that persons experiencing homelessness may be able to obtain and retain permanent housing, attain economic independence, and self-sufficiency for the long-term. Shelters also:

- Provide 24-hour access 7 days per week to the shelter facility.
- Assist individuals and families to develop housing plans, obtain needed documents for the housing application process, and to obtain income through public benefit and employment.
- Identify and locate suitable housing options, provide support through the housing location and application process, and provide tenancy skills on how to meet lease obligations.



# Summary of HMS224 Contracted Services.

- **State Homeless Outreach Program (7 agencies).**

Provide outreach services to unsheltered homeless individuals and families, connecting them with emergency shelter, permanent housing, or critical services designed to help homeless individuals and families. Contracted outreach providers:

- Assist with locating and accessing housing options to support access to permanent housing as rapidly as possible.
- Provide connection to other services and supports within the homeless system to assist in meeting basic needs and supporting housing stability.
- Develop housing plans, obtain needed documents for the housing application process, and obtain income through public benefit and employment.

- **State Homeless Outreach Program Legal Services (1 agency).**

Provide statewide vital documents and identification cards in association with the State Homeless Outreach and Shelter Programs.

# Summary of HMS224 Contracted Services.

- **Family Assessment Center (2 agencies).**
  - Serve unsheltered homeless families transitioning to permanent housing in a manner consistent with the Housing First approach.
  - Offer families immediate access to outreach, shelter, and permanent housing without unnecessary pre-requisites.
  - Provide 24-hour access 7 days per week to the FAC facility with all beds/units assigned Case Management.
  - Services are focused on helping families access permanent housing as rapidly as possible and preventing returns to homelessness.
  - Also provides the following:
    - Access to sanitary facilities
    - Personal storage space
    - One nutritious meal per day, or cooking and food supplies;
    - Adequate clothing or access to a clothing bank;
    - Bedding as needed;
    - Support to connect to services that address physical and mental health, addiction, employment, educational and legal needs.

# Summary of HMS224 Contracted Services cont.

- **State Homeless Rapid Re-Housing Program (5 agencies).**

Provide assistance to unsheltered homeless, sheltered homeless, and individuals and families at imminent risk of becoming homeless to access permanent housing as rapidly as possible. Includes assisting with locating and accessing housing options, providing move-in and rental assistance, case management and post housing services to promote stability, and assistance with eviction prevention and avoiding returns to homelessness.

- **State Homeless Permanent Supportive Housing / Housing First (4 agencies).**

Provide support to chronically homeless individuals and/or families in stability and recovery, including assisting to obtain and secure long-term permanent housing, provide necessary support to maintain housing and prevent recidivism to homelessness; and provide homeless and individuals and/or families wrap around services to maintain housing.

# Summary of HMS224 Contracted Services cont.

- **State Homeless Emergency Grants Program (1 agency).**

Provide assistance to unsheltered homeless, sheltered homeless, and individuals and families at imminent risk of becoming homeless who have incomes at or below 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI). Participants must demonstrate a financial and emergency need which is directly related to impending eviction or be a direct barrier toward moving into permanent housing. Assistance may include housing costs to avert imminent eviction, facilitating medical care or emergency medical related expenses, or assistance with transportation or job-hunting assistance that will allow participants to secure employment or increase income to afford housing.

- **Housing Placement Program – TANF Funded (4 agencies).**

Provide assistance to eligible TANF families who are homeless or are at imminent risk of becoming homeless, which includes client assessment, case management, linkage to appropriate landlords, landlord/client intervention, and one to three payments of any combination of security deposit, first month's rent, utilities deposit, or past due utilities if necessary. Assistance includes cultivation and outreach to new prospective landlords to rent to households at imminent risk of homelessness or transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing.

## Summary of HMS224 Contracted Services cont.

- **Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS – Federal Program (1 Lead Agency)**  
Provide permanent housing placement with security deposits and ongoing rent subsidies for homeless persons with HIV/AIDS. Provide ongoing case management/mentoring to maintain stability in housing. Provide short-term rent, mortgage, and utilities assistance (STRMU), which is a short-term homelessness prevention and intervention benefit.
- **Emergency Solutions Grant Program – Federal Program (3 agencies)**  
Provide operational funds to emergency shelters. Provide financial assistance and support services to prevent homelessness among at-risk individuals and families. Provide financial assistance and supportive services to rapidly re-house those who are literally homeless, and to ensure stability after ESG assistance ends.

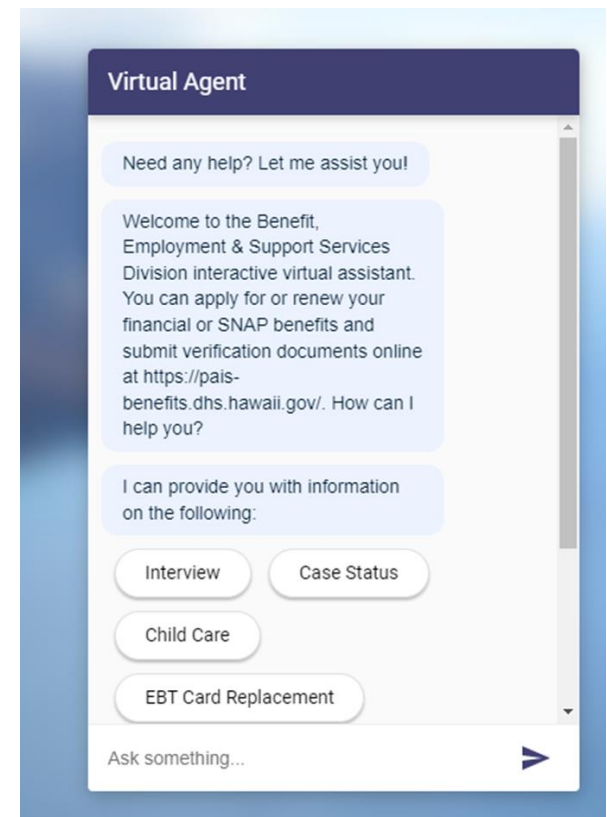
# Housing First in State Law

- Section 346-378, HRS, outlines the principles of ‘Housing First’
- Housing First programs shall incorporate the following core service components:
  - Financial Assistance
  - In-home case management services
  - Affordable housing requirements
  - Landlord cultivation
  - Housing-placement requirements
  - Support services to move program participants to self-sufficiency
- Annual reports submitted to Legislature and available on DHS website.

# Support for Providers

- **Monthly Meetings with Contracted Providers.**  
Enables conversation between Program Staff and providers, and allows the opportunity to keep providers informed about key updates.
- **Emphasis on Continuous Quality Improvement.**  
Continuously looking to provide feedback on services, including getting input from providers to inform the CQI process.
- **Explore Opportunities for Partnerships Across the Division.**  
Connect HPO providers with SNAP Outreach providers, and continuously looking at how to connect HPO providers and other BESSD offices.

**EXAMPLE:** HPO providers received briefings earlier this year on a new Virtual Agent to assist BESSD clients to better access and navigate SNAP and Financial Assistance benefits.



# Any Questions???

