
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HOUSING.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii has the
2 highest per capita rate of homelessness of any state in the
3 nation. Hawaii also has the highest rate of chronic unsheltered
4 homeless per capita of any state. An estimated 7,620 people are
5 living on the streets and in shelters in Hawaii. Addressing
6 homelessness requires a multi-faceted approach using
7 interventions targeted to the particular characteristics of the
8 population being served. Two programs critically necessary to
9 address homelessness in Hawaii are the housing first and shallow
10 rent subsidy programs.

11 Housing first programs are proven to be effective in
12 addressing homelessness for chronically homeless individuals,
13 including those who have an addiction or mental illness, or
14 both. The programs provide housing and support services, which
15 enable the homeless to successfully transition to permanent
16 housing. The principles of housing first programs include:



- 1 (1) Moving chronically homeless individuals into housing
2 directly from the streets and shelters without a
3 precondition to accept or comply with treatment;
- 4 (2) Providing robust support services for program
5 participants that are predicated on assertive
6 engagement rather than coercion;
- 7 (3) Granting chronically homeless individuals priority as
8 program participants in housing first programs;
- 9 (4) Embracing a harm-reduction approach to addictions
10 rather than mandating abstinence while supporting
11 program participant commitments to recovery; and
- 12 (5) Providing program participants with leases and tenant
13 protections as provided by law.

14 The legislature further finds that while housing first
15 programs are relatively costly, they are also cost-effective.
16 Providing housing and services under the housing first programs
17 is less costly than the alternative of incurring costs for
18 emergency and other services necessary for unhoused persons who
19 are chronically homeless. At the end of 2015, over one thousand
20 three hundred households required permanent supportive housing
21 on Oahu alone. Many of the households that fall into this



1 highly vulnerable category can place a strain on existing public
2 resources. An example is the frequent use of emergency room
3 services, as over forty per cent of those surveyed reported
4 three or more emergency room visits in the last six months.

5 Shallow rent subsidy programs are proven to be effective in
6 securing and maintaining housing for working individuals and
7 families who are homeless. A significant segment of homeless
8 people has a stable source of income and only needs modest
9 financial help and some "housing stabilization" services,
10 instead of full-scale subsidies and intensive, ongoing case
11 management. More than a quarter of the Hawaii households that
12 fall into homelessness do so solely because they are short of
13 money to pay rent. For these individuals and families, small
14 subsidies allow them to more rapidly secure housing and move out
15 of shelters into permanent housing. Rapid rehousing is
16 especially critical for families with children.

17 The shallow rent subsidy program will increase flow out of
18 existing shelters, allowing for entry and services to a higher
19 number of homeless individuals and families each year.
20 Increasing flow out of shelters to permanent housing better
21 utilizes current staffing and shelter services and will reduce



1 the need to create new shelters with added costs. Because
2 individual subsidies under a shallow rent subsidy program are
3 low, homelessness can be resolved for numerous individuals and
4 families relative to the total cost of the program.

5 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the
6 department of human services to support the housing first
7 programs and shallow rent subsidy program.

8 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$3,000,000 or so much
10 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 to be
11 deposited to the credit of the housing first special fund
12 established under section 346-377, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

13 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the housing first
14 special fund the sum of \$3,000,000 or so much thereof as may be
15 necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the department of human
16 services to continue to administer housing first programs for
17 chronically homeless individuals in the State.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
19 human services for the purposes of this Act.

20 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$2,000,000 or so much



1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2016-2017 for the
2 shallow rent subsidy program to assist homeless working
3 individuals or families in obtaining or maintaining permanent
4 housing and to cover housing stabilization services and
5 administrative costs to operate the program; provided that the
6 maximum rent supplement shall be \$500 per month per household.

7 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
8 human services for the purposes of this Act.

9 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2016.



Report Title:

Housing; Homeless; Shallow Rent Subsidy Program; Housing First; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the shallow rent subsidy program for homeless working individuals or families who are ready to rent permanent housing in order to obtain and maintain permanent housing. Appropriates funds to the department of human services to continue to administer housing first programs for chronically homeless individuals. (SD1)

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