
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 chronically
4 unsheltered homeless per capita of any state. An estimated
5 7,921 people are living on the streets and in shelters in
6 Hawaii. Addressing homelessness requires a multi-faceted
7 approach using interventions that are targeted to the particular
8 characteristics of the population being served. Three programs
9 critically necessary to address homelessness in Hawaii are
10 housing first, rapid re-housing, and the state rent supplement
11 for homeless families and individuals.

12 Housing first programs are proven to be effective in
13 addressing homelessness for chronically homeless individuals,
14 including those who have an addiction or mental illness, or
15 both. The principles of housing first programs include:



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- 1 (1) Moving chronically homeless individuals into housing
2 directly from the streets and shelters without a
3 precondition of accepting or complying 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 each
11 program participant's commitment to recovery; and
- 12 (5) Providing program participants with leases and tenant
13 protections as provided by law.

14 While housing first programs are relatively costly, they
15 are cost-effective. Providing housing and services under the
16 housing first program is less costly than providing the services
17 necessary for unhoused, chronically homeless persons, such as
18 emergency services.

19 The rapid re-housing and state rent supplement programs are
20 proven to be effective in securing and maintaining housing for
21 working individuals, senior or disabled individuals, and



1 families who are homeless. A significant segment of homeless
2 people have a stable source of income and need only modest
3 financial help and some "housing stabilization" services rather
4 than full-scale subsidies and intensive, ongoing case
5 management. More than a quarter of Hawaii households fall into
6 homelessness simply because they are short of money to pay their
7 rent; these households otherwise have no other underlying
8 issues. For these individuals and families, small subsidies
9 allow them to more rapidly secure housing and move out of
10 shelters into permanent housing.

11 Rapid re-housing provides struggling households with a
12 financial "shot in the arm"; that is, often a one-time payment
13 to cover delinquent rent, utility payments, or first month's
14 rent and security deposit. Short term intervention is often all
15 many families need to avoid homelessness, or to quickly bounce
16 back from becoming homeless.

17 The state rent supplement program provides a "shallow", but
18 sustained, subsidy to struggling households. Unlike the "deep"
19 subsidy Housing Choice Voucher program, better known as the
20 Section 8 program, which helps families at the lowest ends of
21 the income scale by bridging a wide affordability gap between



1 income and housing costs, the state rent supplement program
2 helps households who are closer to financial self-sufficiency
3 but still have a narrow affordability gap to fill. The state
4 rent supplement program provides an ongoing subsidy, enabling
5 homeless households or those at imminent risk of homelessness to
6 close the affordability gap, maintain housing, and achieve self-
7 sufficiency. Households would pay a minimum of thirty percent
8 of their income for rent, and the rental subsidy would be capped
9 at \$500 per month.

10 Because individual subsidies under the rapid re-housing and
11 state rent supplement programs are relatively low, the programs
12 can resolve homelessness for a large number of individuals and
13 families relative to the total cost of the subsidy program.

14 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to support
15 the State's housing first programs in assisting Hawaii's
16 chronically homeless who are often the most vulnerable, most
17 visible, and most difficult to serve. This Act also
18 appropriates funds to support rapid re-housing and the state
19 rent supplement program.

20 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$3,000,000 or so much



1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 and the
2 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
3 2018-2019 for the department of human services to continue to
4 administer housing first programs for chronically homeless
5 individuals in the State.

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

8 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$2,500,000 or so much
10 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 and the
11 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
12 2018-2019 for the rapid re-housing program to:

- 13 (1) Assist homeless individuals or families in obtaining
14 or maintaining permanent housing;
- 15 (2) Assist individuals and families who require financial
16 assistance to avoid homelessness; and
- 17 (3) Cover housing stabilization services and
18 administrative costs to operate the program.

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



1 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
 2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$7,000,000 or so much
 3 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 and the
 4 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
 5 2018-2019 for the state rent supplement program to:

- 6 (1) Assist homeless individuals and families or those at
- 7 imminent risk of homelessness to obtain and maintain
- 8 permanent housing;
- 9 (2) Cover housing stabilization services; and
- 10 (3) Cover administrative and personnel costs to operate
- 11 the program.

12 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii
 13 public housing authority for the purposes of this Act.

14 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

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H.B. NO. 1196

Report Title:

Housing; Homelessness; Housing First; Rapid Rehousing; State Rent Supplement Program; Appropriations

Description:

Appropriates funds to DHS for the housing first program and the rapid re-housing program to assist chronically homeless individuals and individuals who require financial assistance to avoid homelessness. Appropriates funds to the Hawaii Public Housing Authority for the state rent supplement program to assist homeless individuals or families and those at imminent risk of homelessness.

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