
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that because of Hawaii's
2 high cost of living and food prices that many low-income
3 individuals and families struggle to purchase food. The
4 supplemental nutrition assistance program, formerly known as the
5 food stamp program, is a crucial means of providing necessary
6 assistance in the purchasing of food for some of Hawaii's most
7 disadvantaged citizens. In September 2016, 173,669 people in
8 Hawaii participated in the supplemental nutrition assistance
9 program, which is 5.1 per cent less participation than in
10 September 2015. While Hawaii secures over \$500,000,000 annually
11 in supplemental nutrition assistance program moneys, the United
12 States Department of Agriculture estimates of program
13 participation rates in 2014 ranked Hawaii thirty-fourth among
14 states in the percentage of eligible individuals that
15 participate in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

16 The legislature also finds that if all individuals who are
17 eligible for the supplemental nutrition assistance program were



1 to participate then Hawaii would receive hundreds of millions in
2 federal funding. Additionally, Moody's Analytics estimates that
3 for every dollar given in supplemental nutrition assistance
4 program funds, up to one dollar and seventy cents can be
5 generated in the local economy.

6 The legislature further finds that many individuals that
7 are eligible to participate in the supplemental nutrition
8 assistance program do not participate because they are unaware
9 of their eligibility or of the supplemental nutrition assistance
10 program's existence. Authorizing healthcare providers, non-
11 profits, businesses, and faith-based organizations to assist
12 those in need to apply for the supplemental nutrition assistance
13 program may help healthcare providers reach out and educate
14 clients about the benefits available through participation in
15 the supplemental nutrition assistance program. Furthermore,
16 authorizing healthcare providers to report to the legislature an
17 aggregate collection of data about state supplemental nutrition
18 assistance program participation creates a mechanism by which
19 policy makers can better establish plans to maximize federal
20 funding and increase food security. Each of these outcomes will
21 result in the State having more supplemental nutrition



1 assistance program participants, which in turn will result in
2 heightened food security for low-income individuals and
3 families, and more money flowing into the State's economy.

4 The purpose of this Act is to authorize healthcare
5 providers, non-profits, businesses, and faith based
6 organizations to ask clients, and subsequently report aggregate
7 responses to the department of human services, about
8 participation in the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

9 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
10 amended by adding a new section to part II to be appropriately
11 designated and to read as follows:

12 "§346- Supplemental nutrition assistance program
13 participation. (a) Healthcare providers, non-profits,
14 businesses, and faith based organizations may provide
15 supplemental nutrition assistance program applications to
16 prospective applicants.

17 (b) Healthcare providers, non-profits, businesses, and
18 faith-based organizations that provide supplemental nutrition
19 assistance program applications to prospective applicants shall
20 maintain a record of the distribution of the SNAP applications



1 and upon request shall make the record available to the
2 department of human services."

3 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

4 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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H.B. NO. 2154

Report Title:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Description:

Authorizes healthcare providers, non-profits, businesses, and faith based organizations to assist in providing the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) applications to prospective applicants in order to increase SNAP participation in Hawaii.

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