
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE NEIGHBOR ISLANDS BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM.

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

1 SECTION 1. The purpose of this Act is to require the
2 department of human services to establish a neighbor islands
3 blind and visually impaired service pilot program that
4 supplements existing statewide services by providing training
5 and other services to neighbor island residents who are blind or
6 visually impaired.

7 SECTION 2. (a) The department of human services shall
8 establish a neighbor islands blind and visually impaired service
9 pilot program that provides training and other services to blind
10 and visually impaired individuals residing on the neighbor
11 islands.

12 (b) The pilot program shall provide peer-to-peer outreach,
13 sight loss adjustment, peer counseling support, and mobility
14 training to program participants, including:

15 (1) Outreach efforts to identify individual and program
16 needs;



- 1 (2) Coordination with existing programs to ensure that
- 2 existing services are identified and used to the
- 3 maximum extent possible;
- 4 (3) Adjustment services, including individual and group
- 5 counseling;
- 6 (4) Access to and training for use of telecommunications
- 7 services to receive current news, weather alerts, and
- 8 other vital public information;
- 9 (5) Awareness development and training for use of
- 10 computers, smart phones, and other communications
- 11 devices;
- 12 (6) Daily living, self-care, and home management skills;
- 13 (7) Orientation and mobility training;
- 14 (8) Advocacy training and assistance to secure needed
- 15 benefits, services, and individual rights; and
- 16 (9) Other services, including peer support needed for
- 17 program participants to sustain independence and
- 18 social integration.
- 19 (c) The services of the pilot program provided pursuant to
- 20 subsection (b) shall be provided by volunteers, who shall be
- 21 recruited, assigned, and supervised by the department or an



1 entity contracted by the department to organize and implement
2 the pilot program. All volunteers shall have the necessary
3 qualification, shall be chosen based on experience and training,
4 and shall utilize training methods consistent with the
5 structured discovery approach used by the new visions program
6 operated by the Ho'opono services for the blind branch within the
7 department of human services' division of vocational
8 rehabilitation.

9 (d) The pilot program shall also provide program
10 participants with special needs transportation assistance. The
11 department shall work with neighbor island transportation
12 service providers and other individuals to develop a special
13 needs transportation assistance service network to serve program
14 participants.

15 (e) Applications for participation in the pilot program
16 shall be submitted on a form furnished by the department. The
17 department shall establish procedures and requirements for
18 accepting program participants.

19 (f) The pilot program shall be authorized to extend and
20 supplement the existing services provided by the Ho'opono
21 services for the blind branch.



1 (g) The department shall enter into a contract with a
2 nonprofit organization to recruit, train, and supervise
3 volunteer service corps members and to oversee the pilot
4 program; provided that existing department personnel may be
5 assigned to fulfill administrative and fiscal responsibilities
6 of the pilot program. Any nonprofit organization contracted
7 under this subsection shall have:

8 (1) The knowledge, experience, and qualifications
9 necessary to provide peer support services to program
10 participants;

11 (2) A management team, consisting of officers and
12 directors, of which a majority are blind or visually
13 impaired; and

14 (3) Membership chapters or organization subunits located
15 on the neighbor islands that will be served by the
16 pilot program.

17 (h) The department shall submit a report of its findings
18 and recommendations pertaining to the neighbor islands blind and
19 visually impaired service program to the legislature no later
20 than thirty days prior to the convening of the regular session
21 of 2025. The report shall include:



- 1 (1) A record of pilot program activities and
- 2 accomplishments;
- 3 (2) A recommendation on whether to extend the program; and
- 4 (3) Any proposed legislation.
- 5 (i) The department shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter
- 6 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, necessary to carry out the purposes
- 7 of this Act.

8 (j) As used in this section:

9 "Department" means the department of human services.

10 "Pilot program" means the neighbor islands blind and
11 visually impaired service pilot program to be established
12 pursuant to this Act.

13 "Program participant" means a resident of a county with a
14 population less than five hundred thousand whose mobility or
15 ability to live independently is substantially limited due to
16 loss of sight and who is participating in the pilot program.

17 "Special needs transportation" means transportation
18 provided to program participants at times or for trips when
19 public transportation is not a reasonable option.

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



1 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to
2 fund the establishment and operation of the neighbor islands
3 blind and visually impaired service pilot program, including
4 funding for the hiring of necessary staff, travel, and per diem
5 expenses; stipends for living expenses for pilot program
6 volunteers; provision of special transportation assistance for
7 program participants; and other necessary expenses associated
8 with the pilot program; provided that:

9 (1) The department of human services shall identify and
10 secure other sources of funding, including federal
11 funding, to provide for matching funds for the pilot
12 program; and

13 (2) Any funds appropriated pursuant to this section shall
14 be in addition to and shall not supplant any portion
15 of the base budget for any state or county agency
16 providing services for blind or visually impaired
17 persons.

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

20 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2060, and
21 shall be repealed on June 30, 2025.



H.B. NO. 1945
H.D. 1

Report Title:

Neighbor Islands Blind and Visually Impaired Service Pilot Program; Department of Human Services; Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; Ho'opono Services for the Blind Branch; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the department of human services to establish a neighbor islands blind and visually impaired service pilot program that provides training and other services to blind or visually impaired individuals residing on the neighbor islands. Requires a report to the legislature. Appropriates funds. Repeals 06/30/2025. Effective 7/1/2060. (HD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

