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# 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 and entities to develop  
13 a special needs transportation assistance service network to  
14 serve program 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, and prescribe forms necessary to  
7 carry out the purposes of this Act.
- 8 (j) As used in this section:
- 9 "Department" means the department of human services.
- 10 "Neighbor island" means a county with a population less  
11 than five hundred thousand.
- 12 "Pilot program" means the neighbor islands blind and  
13 visually impaired service pilot program to be established  
14 pursuant to this Act.
- 15 "Program participant" means a resident of a neighbor island  
16 whose mobility or ability to live independently is substantially  
17 limited due to loss of sight and who is participating in the  
18 pilot program.
- 19 "Special needs transportation" means transportation  
20 provided to program participants at times or for trips when  
21 public transportation is not a reasonable option.



1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 to  
4 fund the establishment and operation of the neighbor islands  
5 blind and visually impaired service pilot program, including:

6 (1) Funding for the hiring of necessary staff, travel, and  
7 per diem expenses;

8 (2) Stipends for living expenses for pilot program  
9 volunteers;

10 (3) Provision of special transportation assistance for  
11 program participants; and

12 (4) Other necessary expenses associated with the pilot  
13 program;

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



**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. (SD1)

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

