
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that homelessness remains
2 one of Hawaii's most pressing challenges, requiring a
3 comprehensive, long-term solution to address the State's
4 affordable housing and homelessness crisis. Hawaii currently
5 has one of the highest per capita homelessness rates in the
6 nation.

7 Over the past five decades, the proportion of cost-burdened
8 renters - those paying more than thirty per cent of their income
9 for housing - has grown from less than twenty-five per cent to
10 over fifty per cent of the population. These escalating housing
11 costs have forced an increasing number of Hawaii residents into
12 homelessness.

13 The legislature further finds that the State has maintained
14 base funding through the department of human services' homeless
15 programs office to support essential services, including
16 emergency and transitional shelters, housing placement programs,
17 state homeless emergency grants, and limited outreach services.



1 Beyond this base funding, the State has consistently
2 appropriated an additional \$10,800,000 annually for nearly a
3 decade to support critical services, including further homeless
4 outreach, legal assistance, rapid re-housing, family assessment
5 centers, and the housing first program. These evidence-based
6 interventions targeting the most vulnerable populations have
7 proven both effective and cost-efficient.

8 The legislature also finds that these strategic investments
9 have begun to yield positive results in addressing the
10 homelessness crisis. Across the State, the rate of homelessness
11 has declined since 2016, correlating with increased use of
12 homeless services programs within the same time frame. However,
13 more recent data indicates homelessness rates have crept up
14 again since 2023 and, thus, demonstrate a need to continue to
15 expand services.

16 The legislature finds that sustained funding for these
17 services that are currently operating outside the base budget of
18 the homeless programs office are essential for program
19 continuity and participant stability. Without dedicated
20 funding, these vital programs face annual uncertainty and risk
21 services being cut or eliminated, which could force individuals



1 and families to regress back into homelessness. Addressing
2 Hawaii's fifty-year trajectory of housing and homelessness
3 challenges requires consistent, long-term investment. While the
4 State has made significant commitments, such as the annual
5 \$50,000,000 allocation for kauhale development, these
6 initiatives alone cannot address the full spectrum of needs, as
7 these funds do not assist in the broader homeless support
8 services that get families into the systems that connect them to
9 programs such as the kauhale initiative. Securing dedicated
10 funding for these support systems, which serve the entire
11 continuum of care, is imperative; yet these services remain
12 outside the homeless programs base budget.

13 The purpose of this Act is to establish sustainable funding
14 for core homelessness services that currently operate without
15 base budget support from the homeless programs office.

16 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$10,800,000 or so
18 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
19 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
20 year 2026-2027 for the department of human services to fund and



1 administer core homelessness services in the State; provided
2 that the sums appropriated shall be expended as follows:

- 3 (1) \$3,750,000 for the housing first program;
4 (2) \$3,750,000 for the rapid re-housing program;
5 (3) \$1,550,000 for family assessment centers; and
6 (4) \$1,750,000 for homeless outreach and civil legal
7 services.

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

10 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

11

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 23 2025



H.B. NO. 1489

Report Title:

Homelessness; Services; Department of Human Services;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for the Department of Human Services to fund and administer core homelessness services.

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