

JAN 17 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
INCENTIVES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the consumption of
2 fresh fruits and vegetables is an integral part of a healthy
3 diet and central to the prevention of obesity and chronic
4 diseases. The legislature also finds that every community
5 should have access to fresh and healthy dietary options, but the
6 high cost of fresh produce often makes that difficult. This
7 challenge is felt acutely by participants in the federal
8 supplemental nutrition assistance program, which serves a low-
9 income population that struggles to afford healthy food.

10 The legislature further finds that according to a report
11 issued in 2023, thirty per cent of households in the State are
12 considered food insecure. Considering the effect of food
13 insecurity on people's health, this translates to over
14 \$800,000,000 in added annual health care costs for the State.
15 Due to the COVID-2019 pandemic and rising inflation, households
16 are also facing increasing food costs. Compared to the rest of



1 the nation, households in the State spend one of the highest
2 percentages of their annual budgets on food.

3 The legislature further finds that, through the national
4 Double Up Food Bucks Program, Hawaii has the opportunity to
5 expand access to healthy foods for low-income residents who are
6 eligible for supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits.
7 Currently implemented in more than twenty-five states, the
8 Double Up Food Bucks Program provides matching federal grant
9 funds to state programs that incentivize the use of supplemental
10 nutrition assistance program benefits for the purchase of fresh
11 produce. Provided by both the United States Department of
12 Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the
13 United States Department of Agriculture food insecurity
14 nutrition incentive grants program, these federal matching funds
15 increase access to healthy dietary options while also
16 invigorating local economies and addressing food insecurity.

17 Act 153, Session Laws of Hawaii 2019, created the Hawaii
18 healthy food incentive program, now commonly known as the DA BUX
19 double up food bucks program. The DA BUX double up food bucks
20 program began with a pilot program in 2012 by Kokua Kalihi
21 Valley Comprehensive Family Services on the island of Oahu and



1 The Kohala Center on the island of Hawaii. The program provides
2 a dollar-for-dollar match to supplemental nutrition assistance
3 program beneficiaries who purchase locally grown fruits,
4 vegetables, and proteins at participating farmers' markets,
5 grocery stores, and community-supported agriculture projects.
6 As of 2023, the program was available at close to sixty food
7 retailers across over one hundred market sites and pick-up
8 locations, including grocery stores, farmers' markets,
9 community-supported agriculture programs, and other farm direct
10 retailers.

11 DA BUX is referred to as a triple win for the State, as it
12 provides support for local families, local farmers, and the
13 local economy. From 2020 to 2021, DA BUX supported four hundred
14 seventy farm producers and eight distributors. Each dollar
15 reimbursed to participating DA BUX food retailers for their
16 issued discounts on local produce has an economic multiplier of
17 2.1, meaning that each program dollar issued for local produce
18 incentives contributes \$2.10 to the State's economy. Additional
19 funding will allow the statewide program coordinator, led by The
20 Food Basket on the island of Hawaii, to obtain matching federal
21 funds for continued support of the program. For example, a



1 \$3,000,000 investment by the State in this program would allow
2 for a federal funding match that will contribute over
3 \$12,000,000 to the local economy annually.

4 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
5 funds to the department of agriculture for the continued
6 administration of the Hawaii healthy food incentive program and
7 to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in
8 the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

9 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
11 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
12 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
13 year 2026-2027 for the continued administration of the Hawaii
14 healthy food incentive program and to provide matching funds to
15 beneficiaries who participate in the supplemental nutrition
16 assistance program.

17 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
18 of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

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

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INTRODUCED BY:





S.B. NO. 1191

Report Title:

DOA; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program; DA BUX; Appropriations

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the continued administration of the Hawaii Healthy Food Incentive Program and to provide matching funds to beneficiaries who participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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