

JAN 23 2025

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH PROGRAM.

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

1 SECTION 1. Act 130, Session Laws of Hawaii 2022,
2 established a safe spaces for youth pilot program within the
3 department of human services. Act 130 will be repealed on June
4 30, 2025. The office of youth services has worked on planning
5 and developing the safe spaces for youth pilot program and, with
6 appropriations, recommends the pilot program become permanent,
7 and is ready to open the first state-funded shelter for young
8 adults on the island of Hawaii.

9 The purpose of this Act is to make the safe spaces for
10 youth pilot program a permanent program within the office of
11 youth services.

12 SECTION 2. Chapter 352D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
13 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
14 and to read as follows:

15 "§352D- Safe spaces. (a) There is established within
16 the office of youth services a safe spaces for youth program,
17 which shall provide, subject to the availability of funds, safe

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1 spaces in each county for youth and young adults experiencing or
2 at risk for homelessness.

3 (b) The program shall collaborate with all departments of
4 the State and its political subdivisions that offer services for
5 the purpose of ensuring the well-being of youth and young adults
6 in Hawaii, including the department of education, the department
7 of corrections and rehabilitation, the department of health,
8 department of human services, the department of land and natural
9 resources, the department of law enforcement, the state office
10 on homelessness and housing solutions, the county police
11 departments and other agencies, and the judiciary, to coordinate
12 the identification of youth and young adults who are
13 experiencing homelessness, and placement of these youth and
14 young adults at a shelter for homeless youth or young adults.

15 (c) The office of youth services may enter into contracts
16 with nonprofit organizations to provide services for youth or
17 young adults experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of
18 homelessness. Any nonprofit organization contracted under this
19 subsection shall have the knowledge, experience, and
20 qualifications, including licenses as needed for child caring
21 institutions, and other requirements to operate a shelter for
22 youth or young adults at risk of homelessness or who are

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1 experiencing homelessness. Youth under the age of eighteen
2 shall not be sheltered with young adults eighteen to twenty-
3 four.

4 (d) Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, a
5 shelter for homeless youth contracted under subsection (c) may
6 admit a youth into the shelter's care for up to ninety days
7 without the consent of the youth's parent or guardian.

8 (e) The office shall submit a report pertaining to the
9 safe spaces for youth program to the legislature no later than
10 twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session.

11 (f) The office may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
12 necessary to carry out the purposes of this section.

13 (g) For the purposes of this section:

14 "Shelter for homeless youth" means a facility that operates
15 to receive youth or young adults twenty-four hours a day, seven
16 days a week, and provide youth or young adults with services,
17 including:

18 (1) Overnight lodging and supervision;

19 (2) Hot meals and hot showers;

20 (3) Access to medical and behavioral health services; and

21 (4) Education and employment support."

22 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

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

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INTRODUCED BY: 

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BY REQUEST

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Report Title:

OYS; Safe Spaces for Youth Program; Homeless Youth and Young Adults; Shelter

Description:

Makes the Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program permanent within the Office of Youth Services. Requires the program to collaborate with all state and county departments that offer services for youth and young adults to coordinate the identification of youth and young adults who are experiencing homelessness and placement of these youth at a shelter for homeless youth or young adults. Authorizes the Office of Youth Services to contract with nonprofit organizations to provide shelters for homeless youth or young adults. Requires the Office of Youth Services to submit a report twenty days prior to the regular session of the Legislature.

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

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

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DEPARTMENT: Human Services

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SAFE SPACES FOR YOUTH PROGRAM.

PURPOSE: To make the Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program a permanent program within the Office of Youth Services.

MEANS: Add a new section to chapter 352D, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

JUSTIFICATION: Act 130, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2022 (Act 130), established the Safe Spaces for Youth Pilot Program in the Department and provided appropriations. The Office of Youth Services (OYS) is the lead in planning and implementing the pilot program. Act 130 will be repealed on June 30, 2025.

Since Act 130, OYS has gathered research, established an interagency workgroup, developed a program plan, and contracted with the Hawaii Youth Services Network and other agencies to implement the National Safe Place Network program.

Act 130 provided \$868,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2023-2024 for OYS to establish homeless youth shelters in each county and a program specialist position. Act 164, SLH 2023 (Act 164), and Act 230, SLH 2024 (Act 230), provided \$800,000 in FY 2024-2025 for program planning and implementation. Act 164 also provided for a temporary program specialist position.

To implement the program as intended by Act 130 and provide youth with Safe Spaces, shelter, and Safe Place Network access points, the program should be made permanent within OYS. The consequences faced by homeless youth and young adults are significant and require a permanent and significant response. The forthcoming Act

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130 report to the legislature will include these recommendations.

The initial recommendation from the pilot program is to establish a shelter for young adults ages 18 to 24 on Hawaii island. Currently, the only dedicated shelter for young adults ages 18-24 in the state is on Oahu. There are existing emergency shelters for youth under the age of 18, as youth under the age of 18 are not sheltered with young adults ages 18-24. With a Safe Spaces emergency shelter established in Hawaii island, young adults 18 to 24 at risk of homelessness will have a safe place to go to receive shelter and assistance. The Safe Spaces shelter will work with the Safe Place Network access points, which are locations identified by signage where youth and young adults up to the age of 24 can enter and ask for assistance.

Impact on the public: Making the pilot program permanent will allow OYS to address the needs of unsheltered youth and young adults or those at risk of homelessness with a permanent response. Initially, opening one shelter on Hawaii island will provide those Hawaii island youth and young adults with a Safe Spaces program shelter, reducing their risk of being victims of crime, becoming involved in the criminal justice system, and becoming chronically homeless. The long-term fiscal impact may be positive if youth and young adults remain out of other systems of care.

Impact on the department and other agencies: OYS anticipates working with other agencies that interact with unsheltered youth and young adults and youth at risk of homelessness to collaborate on referrals to the Safe Spaces program shelters so that fewer youth and young adults will enter other systems of care. Making the program permanent in OYS will create an additional

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resource for the Departments of Education, Corrections and Rehabilitation, Health, Land and Natural Resources, Law Enforcement, State Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions, and county and community-based organizations that serve vulnerable youth at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness, and the Judiciary. The Act will also impact the Department of the Attorney General due to the need to assist with the drafting of administrative rules and contracts.

GENERAL FUND: None.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM
DESIGNATION: HMS 501.

OTHER AFFECTED
AGENCIES: Departments of the Attorney General, Education, Corrections and Rehabilitation, Health, Land and Natural Resources, and Law Enforcement, State Office of Homelessness and Housing Solutions, county police, and the Judiciary.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon approval.