
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FAMILY RESILIENCE PILOT PROGRAM.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that more programs and
2 resources are necessary to increase family resilience and reduce
3 the risk of child abuse or neglect. Many families at high risk
4 of entering the child welfare system are unaware of available
5 services or how to access them, or public benefits are not
6 available to address the economic or other fiscal challenge they
7 are facing.

8 The malama ohana working group was established by Act 86,
9 Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, within the office of wellness and
10 resilience to seek, design, and recommend transformative changes
11 to the State's existing child welfare system. In its report
12 submitted to the 2025 legislature, the malama ohana working
13 group stated there is a shortage of resources in Hawaii
14 dedicated to preventing children and families' involvement with
15 child welfare services, especially primary prevention and
16 universal support. The malama ohana working group recommended
17 the establishment of primary prevention and universal support
18 programs that are trauma-informed and culturally responsive in

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1 an effort to divert children and families away from involvement
2 with the child welfare system.

3 The legislature finds that community and school-based
4 organizations are safe, accessible, and non-judgmental spaces
5 where families can access formal and informal supports and
6 referrals. Providing family strengthening programming helps to
7 increase parents' protective factors: parental resilience,
8 social connections, concrete support, knowledge of parenting and
9 child development, and social-emotional competence of children.
10 Community and school-based organizations, such as family
11 resource centers, have been successful in reducing the number of
12 families reported to the child welfare system.

13 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish and
14 fund a five-year family resilience pilot program within the
15 office of wellness and resilience.

16 SECTION 2. (a) There is established within the office of
17 wellness and resilience a family resilience pilot program, in
18 which the office of wellness and resilience shall provide:

19 (1) Trauma-informed peer support navigators with lived
20 experience who have gone through the social services
21 system to assist families with enrollment in public or

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1 other benefits, family strengthening, and cultural
2 programming; and

3 (2) Financial assistance and resource supports to aid with
4 food, clothing, hygiene, housing, parenting, childcare,
5 household, and transportation needs.

6 (b) The office of wellness and resilience, shall
7 establish, no later than December 31, 2025, the following:

8 (1) Data and referral system tracking needs and protocols
9 to comply with applicable state and federal laws; and

10 (2) An implementation and evaluation plan that includes
11 specific, measurable, attainable, reasonable, and
12 time-bound goals.

13 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$987,150 or so much
15 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
16 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
17 2026-2027 for the office of wellness and resilience to carry out
18 the purposes of this Act, including the contracting of services
19 to implement the pilot program.

20 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the office of
21 wellness and resilience.

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1 SECTION 4. This Act, upon its approval, shall take effect
2 on July 1, 2025, and shall be repealed on June 30, 2030.

3
4 INTRODUCED BY: 

5 BY REQUEST

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Report Title:

Office of Wellness and Resilience; Family Resilience Pilot Program

Description:

Establishes the Family Resilience Pilot Program within the Office of Wellness and Resilience and appropriates funds to execute the program, including the contracting of services.

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

DEPARTMENT: Office of the Governor

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO FAMILY RESILIENCE PILOT PROGRAM.

PURPOSE: To establish and fund a five-year family resilience pilot program within the Office of Wellness and Resilience.

MEANS: Enact a session law that establishes the pilot program and appropriates general revenues.

JUSTIFICATION: Act 86, Session Laws of Hawaii 2023, mandated the Malama Ohana Working Group to submit recommendations to improve and transform the child welfare system. In its report to the Legislature, the Malama Ohana Working Group states that there is a shortage of resources in Hawaii to prevent children and families' involvement with the child welfare system. To address this, the Malama Ohana Working Group recommended the establishment of preventative programs and comprehensive services to reduce the risk of families entering the child welfare system. Community and school-based organizations in Hawaii have proven to be spaces where families can access formal and informal supports and referrals. The proposed bill establishes and funds a pilot program that provides peer support navigators, resources, and financial assistance via community and school based organizations.

Impact on the public: Children and families that are at risk of involvement with the child welfare system will receive preventative programs and comprehensive services through the pilot program. If the pilot program is successful in its execution, the pilot program would reduce the number of families and children involved with the child welfare system.

Impact on the department and other agencies:

The Office of Wellness and Resilience will administer contracts for the development, administration, and implementation of the family resilience pilot program. If the pilot program is successful in its execution, the number of incidents of child abuse and neglect reported to the Department of Human Services would be expected to decrease.

GENERAL FUND: \$987,150 for fiscal year 2025-2026.
\$987,150 for fiscal year 2026-2027.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM
DESIGNATION: GOV100.

OTHER AFFECTED
AGENCIES: Department of Human Services.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025.