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## 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 many homeless  
2 persons thrive when they have ready access to familiar support  
3 groups and loving family members. In Hawaii, some homeless  
4 persons are currently stranded in the State, far from their  
5 families, because they lack the financial resources to return  
6 home.

7       The legislature recognizes that Hawaii has limited  
8 resources for human services, and some homeless persons may find  
9 that their families or home states are better equipped to  
10 provide long-term care and support.

11       Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

12       (1) Establish and appropriate moneys for a return-to-home  
13 program to provide travel expenses and relocation  
14 assistance for eligible persons who wish to return to  
15 their home states; and

16       (2) Require the department of human services to develop  
17 and implement a public information campaign related to





1 the State's residency requirements and return-to-home  
2 program.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 346, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
4 amended by adding a new section to part XVII to be appropriately  
5 designated and to read as follows:

6 "§346- Return-to-home program. (a) There is  
7 established within the department the return-to-home program to  
8 provide travel expenses and relocation assistance for eligible  
9 persons who wish to return to their home states.

10 (b) For purposes of the program, the department shall:

11 (1) Establish a public-private partnership by contracting  
12 with eligible nonprofit organizations, for-profit  
13 organizations, or foundations to administer the  
14 program without regard to chapters 103D and 103F;

15 (2) Seek the participation of local airlines, passenger  
16 ship lines, charter companies, travel agencies, and  
17 the visitor industry;

18 (3) Coordinate with federal programs, including the United  
19 States Repatriation Program, to maximize resources and  
20 avoid a duplication of services;





- 1        (4) Seek assistance and input from the governor's  
2        coordinator on homelessness; and
- 3        (5) Work with homeless outreach programs to ensure that  
4        persons who wish to participate are made aware of the  
5        program and that vulnerable populations, including  
6        victims of domestic violence or human trafficking, are  
7        not involuntarily displaced.
- 8        (c) A person shall be eligible to participate in the  
9        return-to-home program if the person:
- 10       (1) Agrees to participate in the program voluntarily;  
11       (2) Maintains legal residence in a state other than  
12       Hawaii;
- 13       (3) Has no verifiable permanent address in Hawaii;  
14       (4) Lacks financial independence, including a return  
15       ticket or the financial means to return home;
- 16       (5) Is unemployed; and  
17       (6) Is reliant, or at risk of becoming reliant, on state  
18       assistance programs;
- 19       provided that a person having at least one dependent child who  
20       resides in the State, or a person receiving medical treatment





1 that cannot be interrupted, shall not be eligible to participate  
2 in the program.

3 (d) The department shall verify the information required  
4 by subsection (c) to prevent fraudulent claims or involuntary  
5 displacement and shall allow a person who is made a participant  
6 in the program without the person's consent, or a person who  
7 wishes to participate in the program but is denied eligibility,  
8 to immediately appeal the decision.

9 (e) The department shall submit a report of its findings  
10 and recommendations, including the number of return-to-home  
11 program participants for the previous year, costs, program  
12 outcomes, and any proposed legislation, to the legislature no  
13 later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular  
14 session.

15 (f) For the purposes of this section:

16 "Home state" means a person's legal state of residence.

17 "Permanent address" means a verifiable physical residence  
18 that a person owns, rents, or resides in with family.

19 "State assistance programs" includes housing subsidies,  
20 unemployment benefits, or any other form of public aid or  
21 welfare."





SECTION 3. No later than , the department of human services shall develop and implement a public information campaign to:

- (1) Inform new arrivals to Hawaii about the State's requirements for establishing legal residency; and
- (2) Inform communities that might benefit from the return-to-home program about the program's availability and eligibility criteria.

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the return-to-home program and public information campaign required by this Act.

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

SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.





# H.B. NO. 1218

1       SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025;  
2 provided that part II of this Act shall take effect on  
3 January 1, 2026.

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INTRODUCED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

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JAN 22 2025





# H.B. NO. 1218

**Report Title:**

DHS; Homelessness; Return-to-Home; Reports; Appropriation

**Description:**

Establishes and appropriates moneys for a return-to-home program within the Department of Human Services to provide travel expenses and relocation assistance for eligible persons who wish to return to their home states. Requires the Department to develop and implement a public information campaign related to the State's residency requirements and return-to-home program.

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

