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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

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

1       SECTION 1. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the  
2 "State Internship and Workforce Development Act".

3       SECTION 2. The legislature finds that state departments  
4 and agencies face significant challenges in filling vacant  
5 positions with qualified candidates. These staff shortages lead  
6 to inefficiencies and prevent the State from optimally  
7 fulfilling its public duties.

8       The legislature further finds that many individuals,  
9 particularly recent graduates and those pursuing new career  
10 paths, lack opportunities to gain hands-on work experience in  
11 public service roles. This presents an opportunity for the  
12 State to support workforce development while addressing  
13 vacancies in public service positions. The legislature  
14 recognizes that a structured, state-funded internship program  
15 can serve as a pipeline for recruiting and retaining skilled  
16 workers in state government.



1        Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a  
2        state-funded internship program that provides participants with  
3        practical work experience, fosters interest in public service  
4        careers, and helps address workforce shortages in state  
5        departments and agencies.

6        SECTION 3. Chapter 78, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended  
7        by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to  
8        read as follows:

9        **"§78-     State internship and workforce development**

10     **program.**    (a)    There is established within the department of  
11     human resources development the state internship and workforce  
12     development program. The department shall administer the  
13     program in conjunction with a designated coordinating agency.  
14     The program shall:

- 15        (1)    Provide paid internship opportunities within various  
16        state departments and agencies;  
17        (2)    Prioritize placement in departments with significant  
18        workforce shortages;  
19        (3)    Offer internships ranging in length from eighty-nine  
20        days to no longer than twelve months; and



1       (4) Include comprehensive training, mentorship, and  
2           evaluation components.

3       (b) The program shall be funded through annual  
4       appropriations by the legislature; provided that state  
5       departments utilizing interns shall contribute a portion of  
6       program costs based on the number of interns placed within the  
7       department, as determined by the department of human resources  
8       development.

9       (c) Any individual who:

10       (1) Is a resident of the State;

11       (2) Is eighteen years of age or older; and

12       (3) Meets specific criteria established by the department  
13       of human resources development and respective  
14       coordinating agencies,

15       shall be eligible for the program.

16       (d) Selection of internship participants shall be based  
17       on:

18       (1) Academic achievement or relevant work experience;

19       (2) Interest in public service careers; and

20       (3) Alignment with departmental workforce needs.

21       (e) As part of the program, internship participants shall:



- 1        (1) Attend and actively participate in all required work  
2        experience training sessions;
- 3        (2) Perform assigned duties and responsibilities in  
4        accordance with program guidelines; and
- 5        (3) Adhere to workplace policies and procedures.
- 6        (f) As part of the program, coordinating agency work sites  
7        shall:
- 8        (1) Demonstrate need and an ability to employ participants  
9        following program completion;
- 10       (2) Implement work experience training to ensure effective  
11       integration of interns into the workplace;
- 12       (3) Abide by all rules and requirements of the program;
- 13       (4) Ensure sufficient supervision and mentorship of  
14       interns to facilitate professional growth and  
15       development;
- 16       (5) Provide meaningful and adequate work experience to  
17       help interns meet the requirements for employment in  
18       the relevant position;
- 19       (6) Conduct regular performance evaluations of interns and  
20       provide feedback to the coordinating agency;



- 1        (7) Collaborate with the department of human resources  
2        development to create career pathways for interns; and
- 3        (8) Ensure that viable and vacant positions relative to  
4        the interns' field of study are available for them to  
5        participate in this program.
- 6        (g) The department of human resource development shall:
- 7        (1) Ensure that the experience gained through the program  
8        qualifies participants to apply for vacant positions  
9        of a similar level and scope within the hosting  
10       department;
- 11       (2) Develop standardized guidelines to align internship  
12       duties with the qualifications required for full-time  
13       employment;
- 14       (3) Provide ongoing support to coordinating agencies to  
15       ensure compliance with program objectives; and
- 16       (4) Collaborate with coordinating agencies to create  
17       career pathways for interns.
- 18       (h) As part of the program, participants shall receive:
- 19       (1) A stipend or hourly wage commensurate with the role  
20       and duration of the internship;



(2) Opportunities for professional development and skills training; and

(3) Priority consideration for full-time employment in state government.

(i) Each coordinating agency shall:

(1) Develop performance metrics to evaluate the program's effectiveness in reducing workforce shortages;

(2) Provide data on intern performance and retention rates for program evaluation; and

(3) Submit an annual report to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session, detailing program participation, costs, and outcomes.

(j) For the purposes of this section:

"Coordinating agency" means the participating State of Hawaii department, agency, or office hosting and employing an intern program participant.

"Eligible participant" means an individual who meets established guidelines for participation in the program, including recent high school graduates, college students,



1 post-graduate students, and individuals seeking to transition  
2 into public service careers.

3 "Internship program" or "program" means the state  
4 internship and workforce development program established  
5 pursuant to this section.

6 "Participant" means an individual accepted into the  
7 internship program."

8 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general  
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so  
10 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and  
11 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal  
12 year 2026-2027 for the implementation of the state internship  
13 and workforce development program, to be allocated as follows:

14 (1) \$ for the implementation of the state  
15 internship and workforce development program; and

16 (2) \$ for five full-time equivalent staff  
17 positions (5.0 FTE) in the department of human  
18 resources development to support the internship  
19 program, including:

20 (A) Four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) human  
21 resources specialist V positions; and



1           (B) One full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) account  
2           clerk V position.

3           The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department  
4 of human resources development for the purposes of this Act.

5           SECTION 5. New statutory material is underscored.

6           SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.





**Report Title:**

DHRD; State Internship and Workforce Development Act; State Internship and Workforce Development Program; Internships; Public Service; State Departments and Agencies; Workforce Development; Vacancies; Shortages; Experience; Positions; Appropriations

**Description:**

Establishes within the Department of Human Resources Development the State Internship and Workforce Development Program. Establishes positions within the Department. Appropriates funds. (SD1)

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