
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO SCHOOL MEALS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii's working
2 families face significant economic challenges, including the
3 rising cost of living, inflation, and limited affordable options
4 for basic needs. Access to nutritious meals is essential for
5 the overall well-being of Hawaii's people. Further, for
6 students, access to healthy meals is critical to academic
7 success and achievement. However, for some students, school
8 meals may be their only consistent source of food.

9 The legislature also finds that Aloha United Way released
10 the asset limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE) report
11 in January 2025, which identified that, while twelve per cent of
12 households in the State are below the poverty line, twenty-nine
13 per cent are identified as ALICE households. ALICE households
14 are defined as households with incomes above the federal poverty
15 level but continue to struggle with the bare-minimum costs of
16 basic necessities such as housing, childcare, food,
17 transportation, health care, and a smartphone plan, plus taxes.



1 The report also found that forty-six per cent of ALICE
2 households experience consistent food insecurity.

3 The legislature further finds that subsidizing the meal
4 costs for ALICE households will have the benefit of providing
5 support to families in need. Additionally, subsidized meal
6 costs for students will allow students to focus on their
7 academic careers, extracurricular activities, and life goals.
8 Meal subsidies at department of education schools will allow
9 more students to achieve a high-quality education while ensuring
10 adequate nutrition for physical development and mental well-
11 being.

12 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 13 (1) Require the department of education to adopt
14 administrative rules to provide a lower rate or free
15 meals to students based on their economic need; and
16 (2) Appropriate funds to the department of education to
17 subsidize meal costs for students whose families
18 qualify as ALICE households.

19 SECTION 2. The department of education shall adopt
20 administrative rules pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised



1 Statutes, to provide a lower rate or free meals to students
2 based on their economic need pursuant to this Act.

3 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
4 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
5 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and
6 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
7 year 2026-2027 for meal subsidies for students at department of
8 education schools whose families are classified as asset
9 limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE) households.

10 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
11 of education for the purposes of this Act.

12 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

DOE; ALICE; Meal Subsidies; Rules; Appropriations

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Education for meal subsidies for students whose families are classified as asset limited, income constrained, employed (ALICE) households. Requires the Department of Education to adopt administrative rules. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

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

