
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO STUDENT BASIC NEEDS SUPPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that post-secondary
2 student success depends not only on access to academic programs
3 but also on students' ability to meet basic needs while enrolled
4 in school. Barriers such as housing instability, food
5 insecurity, transportation challenges, and limited access to
6 public benefits can adversely affect students' persistence,
7 credit accumulation, and degree completion.

8 The legislature further finds that the university of Hawaii
9 system lacks Hawaii-specific data on the effectiveness of
10 coordinated basic needs support, including housing stability, in
11 improving student outcomes.

12 The legislature also finds that in accordance with article
13 X, section 6, of the Hawaii State Constitution, this Act
14 involves a matter of statewide concern.

15 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a
16 limited pilot program at a single university of Hawaii campus to



1 assess whether targeted basic needs support, including housing
2 stability, improves student persistence and academic progress,
3 prior to consideration of any systemwide expansion.

4 SECTION 2. (a) As used in this Act, unless the context
5 clearly requires otherwise:

6 "Basic needs" means access to food, transportation,
7 healthcare, stable housing, and other essential supports
8 necessary for a student's ability to remain enrolled in school
9 and make academic progress.

10 "Pilot campus" means the university of Hawaii system campus
11 selected by the board of regents in subsection (c).

12 "Pilot program" means the university of Hawaii basic needs
13 pilot program established by subsection (b).

14 "Student experiencing housing instability" means a student
15 who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence,
16 including students living in temporary housing, emergency
17 shelters, or other unstable housing arrangements, consistent
18 with applicable federal guidance for post-secondary students.

19 (b) The university of Hawaii shall establish a basic needs
20 pilot program to assist students.



12 The benefits navigator shall be based at a designated
13 location at the pilot campus, to which students shall be
14 directed to receive assistance.

15 (e) The pilot campus, in coordination with the benefits
16 navigator, shall develop and periodically update a basic needs
17 pilot campus plan, which shall:

18 (1) Identify existing campus resources that address
19 student basic needs;
20 (2) Assess barriers to access and use of the resources
21 identified in paragraph (1);



- (3) Identify opportunities for partnerships with community-based organizations;
- (4) Outline outreach strategies to inform students of available supports; and
- (5) Assess the need for additional state or federal resources.

SECTION 3. (a) Beginning with the 2026-2027 academic

8 year, the university of Hawaii shall conduct an annual student
9 basic needs survey at the pilot campus to assess:

- (1) Housing stability;
- (2) Food security;
- (3) Access to transportation; and
- (4) Awareness and use of available basic needs resources.

14 (b) Data from the survey conducted pursuant to subsection
15 (a) shall be collected and reported in the aggregate and in
16 compliance with all applicable state and federal privacy laws,
17 including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

18 (c) No later than thirty days prior to the regular
19 sessions of 2027 and 2028, the university of Hawaii shall submit
20 to the legislature a report that describes:



- (1) The results of the survey conducted pursuant to subsection (a);
- (2) Students' use of services offered by the pilot program; and
- (3) Observed effects on student persistence and academic progress.

SECTION 4. (a) The university of Hawaii may establish a

8 housing stability pilot project at the pilot campus to provide
9 targeted support to students experiencing housing instability.

10 (b) Subject to available funding, the housing stability
11 pilot project may include:

- (1) Short-term emergency housing assistance;
- (2) Referrals to housing support organizations; and
- (3) Case coordination to support continued enrollment.

15 (c) If established, the housing stability pilot project
16 shall operate for a period not to exceed two academic years,
17 unless extended by the legislature.

18 (d) No later than twenty days prior to the convening of
19 the regular session following the conclusion of any housing
20 stability pilot project, the university of Hawaii shall submit
21 to the legislature an evaluation report that includes:



- (1) Student participation levels in the housing stability pilot project;
- (2) Retention and academic progress indicators;
- (3) The costs of the housing stability pilot project; and
- (4) Recommendations regarding continuation, modification, or expansion of the housing stability pilot project.

7 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
9 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for
10 the university of Hawaii basic needs pilot program established
11 by section 2(b) and housing stability pilot project established
12 by section 4(a) of this Act; provided that provided that the
13 appropriation shall support only the university of Hawaii pilot
14 campus, identified in section 2(c) of this Act, and related
15 evaluation activities, including:

16 (1) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)
17 benefits navigator position, established by section
18 2(d) of this Act;
19 (2) \$ to conduct the annual student basic needs
20 survey pursuant to section 3(a) of this Act; and



3 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the university of
4 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

5 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026, and
6 shall be repealed on June 30, 2028.

7

INTRODUCED BY:

WZG

JAN 16 2026



H.B. NO. 1596

Report Title:

University of Hawaii; Basic Needs Pilot Program; Housing Stability Pilot Project; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a Basic Needs Pilot Program at a single campus of the University of Hawaii system. Authorizes the establishment of a Housing Stability Pilot Project at that campus. Appropriates funds.

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