
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.



1 (c) The board of regents of the university of Hawaii shall
2 select one campus within the university of Hawaii system, at
3 which a basic needs pilot campus plan shall be established. The
4 board of regents shall select the campus based on demonstrated
5 student need and the campus' capacity to implement and evaluate
6 the pilot program.

7 (d) There shall be established one benefits navigator
8 position at the pilot campus to assist students in accessing:

9 (1) Public benefits and assistance programs;

10 (2) Emergency financial or basic needs assistance; and

11 (3) Community-based resources and services.

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 year, the university of Hawaii shall conduct an annual student 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.

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

(c) No later than thirty days prior to the regular sessions of 2027 and 2028, the university of Hawaii shall submit 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 housing stability pilot project at the pilot campus to provide targeted support to students experiencing housing instability.

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

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

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

(d) No later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session following the conclusion of any housing stability pilot project, the university of Hawaii shall submit 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.

SECTION 5. 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 2026-2027 for the university of Hawaii basic needs pilot program established by section 2(b) and housing stability pilot project established by section 4(a) of this Act; provided that provided that the appropriation shall support only the university of Hawaii pilot campus, identified in section 2(c) of this Act, and related evaluation activities, including:

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



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1 (3) \$ to implement a housing stability pilot
2 project pursuant to section 4 of this Act.

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:



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.

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

