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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. The legislature finds that Hawaii is at a  
2 critical demographic and economic crossroads. The 2025 Holomua  
3 Collective Affordability Survey surveyed over three thousand two  
4 hundred local working residents, and found that seventy-five per  
5 cent of respondents are currently considering, or are unsure if  
6 they will have to, relocate to a less expensive state, with  
7 fifty-seven per cent of those considering a move within the next  
8 five years. These numbers exemplify the widening gap between  
9 local wages and the cost of living. In 2023, the asset limited,  
10 income constrained, employed (ALICE) household survival budget  
11 for a family of four was \$110,112, and forty-five per cent of  
12 households fell below this threshold.

13        The legislature further finds that the State's youth face a  
14 precarious future. The Hawaii Workforce Funders Collaborative  
15 reports that nearly thirty per cent of the approximately one  
16 hundred seventy thousand young residents estimated to enter the  
17 State's workforce over the next decade will lack viable



1 opportunities to build a sustainable career in the state. To  
2 prevent a permanent loss of local talent, the State must bridge  
3 the gap between education and employment by investing in robust  
4 career counseling infrastructure and work-based learning  
5 opportunities that connect students to high-quality, local  
6 opportunities.

7 The legislature recognizes that efforts from multiple state  
8 departments and agencies, nonprofit partners, and labor unions  
9 have made, and continue to make significant foundational  
10 progress in increasing workforce development opportunities for  
11 local working residents, including through the adoption of the  
12 State Unified Plan by the department of labor and industrial  
13 relations and the workforce development council. This  
14 collaborative framework has begun to bring together education,  
15 industry, labor, and social services to connect federal  
16 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding with state  
17 resources. However, achieving the vision of a resilient,  
18 inclusive economy requires transitioning from a temporary  
19 collaborative effort to a codified, long-term aligned strategy  
20 and goal.



1       The legislature further finds that successful models in  
2    states such as Idaho, Maine, Minnesota, and Virginia demonstrate  
3    that comprehensive workforce strategies anchored by a common,  
4    statewide North Star goal are essential for long-term alignment  
5    and accountability. By establishing clear metrics and a  
6    whole-of-government approach, these states have integrated  
7    funding streams and established momentum through data  
8    collection, sharing, and analysis.

9       Despite considerable effort and growth over the past  
10   decade, the State's workforce development landscape lacks a  
11   common long-term strategy. The establishment of a common  
12   long-term strategy can provide the framework, funding, and  
13   motivation for all stakeholders to move in concert toward a  
14   shared definition of success, and will improve the State's  
15   talent pipelines in high-demand, high-wage occupations.

16       Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the  
17   workforce development council to:

18       (1) Recommend to the governor, for inclusion into the  
19       state unified plan, a comprehensive statewide  
20       workforce strategy; and

(2) Facilitate the alignment of workforce development efforts and programs conducted by state departments and agencies to achieve the state unified plan and the comprehensive statewide workforce strategy.

5 SECTION 2. Section 202-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
6 amended to read as follows:

"§202-2 Duties of council. (a) In accordance with P.L.

8 113-128 (29 U.S.C. section 3111), the workforce development  
9 council shall assist the governor in:

10 (1) The development, implementation, and modification of  
11 the state plan consistent with P.L. 113-128 (29 U.S.C.  
12 section 3112);

20 (3) The development and continuous improvement of the  
21 workforce development system in the State;





1 including the design and implementation of common  
2 intake, data collection, case management information,  
3 and performance accountability measurement and  
4 reporting processes, and the incorporation of local  
5 input into the design and implementation, to improve  
6 coordination of services across one-stop partner  
7 programs;

8 (9) The development of allocation formulas for the  
9 distribution of funds for employment and training  
10 activities for adults, and youth workforce investment  
11 activities, to local areas as permitted under P.L.  
12 113-128 (29 U.S.C. sections 3163(b) (3), 3173(b) (3));

13 (10) The preparation of annual reports as described in P.L.  
14 113-128 (29 U.S.C. section 3141(d));

15 (11) The development of the statewide workforce and labor  
16 market information system described in the  
17 Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. section 491-2(e));

18 (12) The development of other policies as may promote  
19 statewide objectives for, and enhance the performance  
20 of, the workforce development system;



1 (13) Creating public awareness and understanding of the  
2 State's workforce development plans, policies,  
3 programs, and activities, and promoting the plans,  
4 policies, programs, and activities as economic  
5 investments;

6 (14) Submitting annual reports of the council's activities  
7 and recommendations to the governor and the  
8 legislature, and posting the annual reports  
9 electronically on the council's website no later than  
10 twenty days before the convening of each regular  
11 session. Annual reports shall include:  
12 (A) The status of the comprehensive state plan for  
13 workforce development; and  
14 (B) Information regarding the workforce development  
15 programs offered throughout the State, the number  
16 of individuals placed in high-demand or  
17 high-growth employment through workforce  
18 development programs by departments, the type or  
19 category of employment garnered, and allocations  
20 of state, federal, and other funding to achieve  
21 placements into higher-skilled jobs;





1 pathway to a career that enables them to learn, work, and thrive  
2 in the State and contribute to a vibrant local economy grounded  
3 in community values by 2045.

4 The comprehensive statewide workforce strategy shall serve  
5 as a long-term framework to unify state and county workforce  
6 efforts under a common goal with aligned priorities and shall be  
7 incorporated into, and guide, each state unified plan and any  
8 modification thereof, regardless of the applicable planning  
9 period.

10 The comprehensive statewide workforce strategy shall  
11 include, at a minimum, specific plans to achieve and metrics to  
12 evaluate progress in the following areas:

- 13 (1) Increasing work-based learning infrastructure and  
14 access;
- 15 (2) Increasing economic resilience and opportunity;
- 16 (3) Reducing underemployment and improving job quality;
- 17 (4) Expanding living-wage employment opportunities;
- 18 (5) Expanding industry-led sectoral partnerships; and
- 19 (6) Increasing job retention."

20 SECTION 3. Section 202-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is  
21 amended to read as follows:



1       "§202-5   Organizational relationships.   (a)   The workforce  
2   development council is placed within the department of labor and  
3   industrial relations for administrative purposes and shall act  
4   in an advisory capacity to the governor.

5       (b)   The workforce development council shall be responsible  
6   for facilitating the alignment of workforce development efforts  
7   and programs conducted by state departments and agencies to  
8   achieve the state unified plan and the comprehensive statewide  
9   workforce strategy recommended pursuant to section 202-2(b).  
10   State departments and agencies shall, to the extent permitted by  
11   law, assist the workforce development council by providing data  
12   and information necessary to support periodic evaluation of the  
13   comprehensive statewide workforce strategy.

14       As used in this section, "facilitating the alignment"  
15   includes convening and supporting interagency planning,  
16   identifying duplicative or complementary efforts, and  
17   recommending policy or administrative changes consistent with  
18   the state unified plan and the comprehensive workforce  
19   strategy."

20       SECTION 4.   New statutory material is underscored.



H.B. NO. 1859

1 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY: 

JAN 23 2026



# H.B. NO. 1859

**Report Title:**

WDC; Workforce Development; Comprehensive Statewide Workforce Strategy; Interagency Alignment; Facilitation

**Description:**

Requires the Workforce Development Council to recommend to the Governor, a comprehensive Statewide Workforce Strategy to inclusion in the State Unified Plan and be responsible for facilitating the alignment of workforce development efforts and programs conducted by state departments and agencies to achieve the State Unified Plan and the Comprehensive Statewide Workforce Strategy.

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