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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO YOUTH HOMELESSNESS.

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

1        SECTION 1. The legislature finds that youth ages eighteen  
2 to twenty-five are at a unique risk for housing and financial  
3 instability due to a combination of developmental, social, and  
4 environmental factors. This age range, known as emerging  
5 adulthood, is a well-documented developmental phase marked by  
6 major life transitions, including leaving the family home,  
7 attending college, entering the workforce, or joining the  
8 military. During this time, the human brain is still undergoing  
9 significant development, particularly in areas responsible for  
10 judgment, impulse control, and long-term planning. In addition,  
11 many young adults have limited experience living independently  
12 and are adjusting to the sudden absence of parental or guardian  
13 oversight.

14       The legislature further finds that even for well-supported  
15 youth, this period of emerging adulthood can be challenging. In  
16 Hawaii, however, where the cost of living is among the highest  
17 in the nation, housing instability becomes far more likely. For



1 vulnerable youth -- those experiencing homelessness,  
2 transitioning out of foster care, fleeing domestic or family  
3 violence, or leaving unsafe home environments -- the challenges  
4 are compounded. These young people often face the transition to  
5 independence with no financial safety net and without the  
6 supportive structures that many of their peers rely on.

7 The legislature additionally finds that, nationally, as  
8 many as 4,200,000 youth and young adults experience homelessness  
9 each year, with roughly half encountering homelessness for the  
10 first time in their lives. Homelessness is deeply traumatic for  
11 young people, yet across the country, and especially in Hawaii,  
12 communities often lack sufficient resources for youth who are  
13 unsafely or unstably housed, couch surfing, doubled up, or  
14 living in situations of crisis.

15 The legislature also finds that in Hawaii, which has one of  
16 the highest homelessness rates per capita in the United States,  
17 these gaps are even more pronounced. According to the 2024  
18 Hawaii Statewide Point in Time Count, approximately 1,140  
19 unaccompanied youth and young adults were identified across the  
20 islands; however, this figure does not include couch surfing  
21 youth, who are often invisible in formal counts. Furthermore,



1 youth who are doubled up or couch surfing are routinely told  
2 they are not literally homeless and therefore do not qualify for  
3 many housing assistance programs or eviction-prevention  
4 resources. Finally, local service providers report that many  
5 Hawaii youth resort to sleeping in cars, staying temporarily  
6 with unsafe acquaintances, or entering adult emergency shelters  
7 -- environments that are not designed for young adults -- simply  
8 to become eligible for help.

9 The legislature notes that by the time youth enter  
10 homelessness systems, they have often already been exposed to  
11 significant trauma, exploitation, and instability. Preventing a  
12 young person from ever reaching that point can dramatically  
13 improve long-term outcomes, including education, employment,  
14 physical health, and mental well-being.

15 The legislature recognizes that homelessness is not only  
16 traumatic, but also expensive. A 2010 United States Department  
17 of Housing and Urban Development study found that individuals  
18 utilizing emergency shelter, transitional housing, or permanent  
19 supportive housing for an average of four to twelve months  
20 incurred system costs ranging from \$3,103 to \$14,418 per  
21 household, with substantially higher costs for families, ranging



1 from \$6,574 to \$38,742. Given inflation, increased service  
2 demands, and Hawaii's high operating costs, true expenses in  
3 2025 are significantly higher.

4 The legislature further notes that in Hawaii, the statewide  
5 average cost of an emergency shelter bed was more than \$27,500  
6 per year in 2015, with annual family shelter costs often  
7 exceeding \$80,000. Furthermore, given the State's unique  
8 challenges, including remote island geography, limited land  
9 availability, and high construction and staffing costs, mean  
10 per-person and per-family shelter costs exceed those of most  
11 states in the country. Finally, preventing youth from falling  
12 into homelessness is consistently shown to be far more cost-  
13 effective than supporting them after they enter the shelter  
14 system or experience long-term instability.

15 The legislature believes that the establishment of a youth  
16 housing stability assistance program represents a fiscally  
17 responsible investment that will offer immediate, flexible, and  
18 youth-centered financial stabilization. Preventing homelessness  
19 upfront can reduce reliance on emergency shelters, lessen strain  
20 on state-funded services, and support healthier long-term  
21 outcomes for Hawaii's emerging adults.



1        Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the  
2        department of human services' office of youth services to  
3        establish a two-year youth housing stability assistance pilot  
4        program to award funds to certain agencies to support eligible  
5        youth with financial assistance.

6        SECTION 2. (a) The department of human services' office  
7        of youth services shall establish and administer a two-year  
8        youth housing stability assistance pilot program to provide  
9        flexible, rapid, and youth-centered financial assistance to  
10       young adults experiencing housing instability following a  
11       qualifying adverse life event.

12       (b) The office of youth services shall award funds to  
13       qualified nonprofit organizations or government agencies that  
14       provide services to eligible youth, as determined by the office,  
15       for the purpose of carrying out the youth housing stability  
16       assistance pilot program with the nonprofit organization's or  
17       government agency's clients.

18       (c) An individual shall be eligible for assistance under  
19       the youth housing stability assistance pilot program if the  
20       individual:

21       (1) Is between eighteen and twenty-five years of age; and







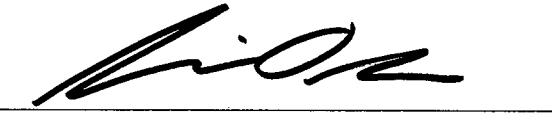


1 the establishment and administration of the youth housing  
2 stability assistance pilot program established pursuant to this  
3 Act.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of  
5 human services for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026, and  
7 shall be repealed on June 30, 2028.

8

INTRODUCED BY: 

JAN 26 2026



# H.B. NO. 2167

**Report Title:**

Office of Youth Services; Youth Homelessness; Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program; Appropriation

**Description:**

Requires the Office of Youth Services to establish a two-year Youth Housing Stability Assistance Pilot Program to award funds to certain nonprofit organizations and government agencies to support eligible youth with financial assistance. 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.*

